

Prolegomena Of The Unexplained

***(Reflections Upon Science Fiction, Eschatology
& The Paranormal)***

by

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Unearthly Beings

Rather than embrace the salvation there for the taking provided by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a growing percentage would rather put their trust in alleged visitors from outer space planning to usher humanity into a New Age utopia under the guise of a “benevolent dictatorship”.

A good example of this increasingly-pervasive UFO mythology appeared in an edition of the *Prince George's Journal* when one of the columnists exhibited a number of the typical intellectual and spiritual fallacies surrounding this controversial issue. For starters, the columnist assumes the federal government is concealing alien corpses from another planet or knowledge pertaining thereof under lock and key in the deserts of the Southwest.

Our government might be guilty of many things (including psychic warfare according to various reports), but harboring extraterrestrial biological remains is probably not one of them. Naturally, people are going to see strange things in the skies above Roswell and Area 51; it is, after all, where experimental aircraft are tested, many of which in all likelihood do not conform to popular aeronautical configurations.

The philosophical reasoning of the columnist under consideration is even more fuddled than her historical assumptions. The columnist complains about the popular conception that the universe's non-human inhabitants are diabolical and bent on interstellar domination. But she herself then makes the equally egregious error in assuming

any extraterrestrial intelligence must be in a moral sense inherently superior to any human being.

Many of the great Western thinkers of both the classical and Christian traditions contend human beings possess the same nature the world over, operating along an established behavioral continuum. Isn't it safe to assume that sentient life across the universe would adhere to a similar standard?

Popular science fiction seems to bear this out as television programs in this genre exhibit a wide array of alien psychologies often in the span of a single episode. On *Star Trek* alone, Vulcans value the intellect while Klingons revel in bloodshed; the Borg epitomize Communism as they have no rulers yet all are slaves having their individuality sublimated to the prerogatives of the collective. The Bajorans of Deep Space Nine are deeply religious, the shows producers using them to comment on the role of religious faith in light of the Space Age. On *Babylon 5*, the Vorlons claim to stand for universal order while pursuing their own nefarious agenda.

So much for extraterrestrials being superior. It seems from this small sampling that such creatures would be as complex and varied as the nations and peoples now inhabiting our own world. *Star Trek* creator Gene Rodenberry through his work seemed to argue humans would actually be the ones providing a sense of balance to galactic affairs with the so-called aliens actually the ones for the most part exhibiting behavioral and philosophical extremes.

It seems the incessant praise of all things alien might just be another attack on the wonders man has

accomplished in his few short millennia of existence. The liberals who bash human ignorance in light of the knowledge an advanced extraterrestrial civilization would have to offer turn around and praise the backwards peoples of the Earth such as jungle tribesman and desert nomads.

Applying this heuristic of the “noble savage” (to borrow Rousseau’s term), wouldn’t us simple Earthfolk bring enlightenment to the interplanetary voyagers? Perhaps we simpletons would even persuade them to abandon their vile space-faring technology (which no doubt pollutes the solar winds) for a way of life more in tune with the principles of cosmic sustainability confined to a single planet.

UFO’s, The Movies, & The End Of The World

An asteroid crashes into the earth, killing thousands and unleashing untold havoc. Just months earlier, millions instantaneously disappeared without a trace.

Nonhuman intelligences --- extraterrestrials if you will --- finally reveal themselves to mankind, claiming responsibility for the act. The aliens contend they have done this because the vanished could not longer be permitted to hinder humanity’s evolutionary advance.

A superior genetically-engineered individual promises to usher in an era of peace and stability --- provided the nations of the world submit to his draconian computer monitoring system. Tiring of global anarchy, the world gladly accepts his diabolical offer.

Are these the scenarios of the latest science fiction

thrillers to hit theaters or newspaper stands? Surprisingly, they are in fact taken from the Book of Revelation and other passages of Bible prophecy, with modern details added as interpretative elements, to make what many consider the most obtuse portions of the Bible a plausible blueprint for the future.

Having jettisoned his Judeo-Christian foundation, modern man stands stupefied as he faces the repercussions of his own moral disregard. This is increasingly evident in the apocalyptic themes addressed in popular culture and mainstream news sources.

Viewers are left free to ponder the cataclysm of their own delight. Over the past several years, moviegoers have seen a number of films about volcanic explosions and asteroids careening into the earth.

The other apocalyptic horsemen needn't feel left out. "The X-Files" regularly examines the possibility of totalitarian government lurking under the shadow of alien conspiracies. Other science fiction productions have examined the spate of incurable mutant pestilences ready to lay waste to our medically impotent civilization. Terrorism experts argue that such a weapon of mass destruction will likely be deployed in the not-too distant future.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between the dramas and the news programs. This boundary was further blurred when scientists cloned a sheep, unleashing a furor over the legal status of potential human beings conceived in such a manner.

This is a legitimate concern in light of the tragedy of abortion plaguing Western society. Yet, the path of caution must run both ways.

What protections will exist for the rest of us from these individuals of enhanced ability? A number of these individuals will no doubt use their aptitude for evil since the fallen parts of man's nature defies even the most sophisticated science.

Does anyone remember the *Star Trek* classic "The Wrath of Khan", the title character himself being the product of genetic engineering run amok? And much of George Lucas' *Star Wars* Saga centers around a series of events referred to as "The Clone Wars".

Scripture foretells of such an individual --- though we know not the specifics of his origins --- who will use cunning and intellect to subdue the earth and its inhabitants for his own nefarious purposes.

There is nothing wrong in raising these kinds of issues as man strives to ascertain his cosmic predicament via the venue of popular culture. In fact, the Christian should rejoice in the soul's struggle to ponder the reality of its creator and the opportunities that open for the sharing of these truths which before now seemed unbelievable.

There is also a danger, however, as those unwilling to repent and realign their ways with those declared by God through Jesus Christ will continue along their own path despite the overwhelming evidence.

Anyone doubting this word of caution only need be reminded of the tragedy of the Heaven's Gate Cult back in the 1990's. Despite possessing advanced educations and sensitivity to the spiritual decay around them, these souls decided to follow a real nutcase who duped them into believing salvation could be found with a group of interstellar Jack Kevorikians trailing a cold dirt wad, the

Hale-Bopp Comet, circling the Milky Way.

Man has been provided the answers to his varied yet interconnected problems if he would only choose to accept Christ's free gift of salvation and follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. Unfortunately, both the flow of history and the forecasts of prophecy seem to indicate that humanity will refuse this message despite the overwhelming consequences. Don't you make the same mistake.

A Review Of *Saucer* by Stephen Coonts

In most science fiction stories, extraterrestrial technology is unveiled to the world when it is piloted to earth by proverbial little green men or bug eyed monsters. However, in *Saucer*, Stephen Coonts presents a scenario where man's initial exposure to a civilization from beyond the earth does not occur overhead but rather from beneath our feet.

In *Saucer*, Coonts details the account of a spacecraft unearthed in the Sahara desert and the international intrigue that results as various nations conspire to acquire the vehicle from an egomaniacal Australian industrialist.

Though the novel focuses primarily on the actions of the factions jockeying to acquire the saucer, Coonts brings up a number of intriguing questions that he raises even if he does not answer them directly.

Scattered throughout the novel are a number of comments examining the philosophical ramifications of evidence suggesting life beyond this earth.

Some seem to be more the opinions of the characters themselves. For example, in discussing the saucer with the President, an advisor says, “You have to do something about these saucers. The Bible thumpers were freaking out yesterday...Already some evangelicals say we are at the end of the world. In Revelation...” The passage continues: “’All right, all right’ the President said, cutting Willard off. He hated it when people quoted the Bible (166).”

Other comments are made as well regarding the epistemological ramifications of extraterrestrials. One character remarks, “The college professor says it is time to acknowledge the presence of other life-forms in the universe. The religious types are going nuts. There’s a mob of a thousand or so across the street in Lafayette Park, waving signs and making speeches talking about the imminent arrival of the Antichrist (187).” An advisor to the President responds, “This is another rightwing conspiracy.”

Such an exchange adequately reflects the dismissive and condescending attitude secularists would enunciate concerning the reaction of religious conservatives to nonhuman intelligent life. However, it is through the more altruistic protagonists that one must consider that Coonts is elaborating his own convictions regarding this highly speculative topic.

If so, the reader is led to believe Coonts is predisposed to the theory of panspermia, the idea life came to earth from outer space. According to the novel, the saucer was flown to earth by beings not all that considerably different than ourselves in terms of appearance or physiology.

Rather, the craft was sent here as part of a mission the occupants knew was a one way trip because a society complex enough to produce a vehicle capable of interstellar travel would have to transport nearly its entire civilization if the occupants hoped to replicate the accomplishments of their home world not to mention being able to make a return trip (195).

But even some wanting to get out from under God's direct gaze still long for an origin a bit more meaningful than slime oozing up onto some rock even though a number of them still can't seem to break free from the grip evolution has over the minds of those predisposed to a more mechanistic explanation.

When asked if humanity's arrival from among the stars discounted the perceived legitimacy of the fossil record, Professor Soldi (the character brought forward to make the grandiose pronouncements pertaining to man's place in the cosmos) responds that, even though mankind might have replaced the earth's original hominid occupants there, is no need to worry about the entire Darwinian enterprise being one colossal scam since, to invoke the tautologies for which this theory of origins is noted "...evolution follows similar courses when similar conditions exist (270)." Basically, even though man might have moved in from elsewhere and never arose from the apes found here, we should still accept the scant fossil evidence that is claimed to exist anyway.

Yet this plot element raises more questions than it solves. For example, if mankind did not originate on earth but rather on another planet, who's to say humanity originated from this proverbial planet X either but rather migrated from planet Y or Z as the human race plays

interstellar flip this house skipping from planet to planet across the cosmos.

Apparently, Coonts doesn't have that high of an opinion of the cosmological argument. For not only does the origin of man stem back through a potentially unending regression of planets, Coonts tosses in a bit of Eastern mysticism as well.

Apart from the saucer's hardware, especially valuable is the spacecraft's computer which contains more than directions on how to operate a flying saucer. Believed to unlock nearly infinite knowledge, one character asks another character that accessed the database through the telepathic interface how the universe ends. Coonts writes, " 'It will be reborn,' Egg Cantrell told her, 'again and again and again....' (311)."

Overall, *Saucer* by Stephen Coonts is a very engaging book. The action will titillate the reader's sense of adventure while speculation about man's place in the universe will intrigue the imagination even if one does not accept the worldview underlying it.

Do Viewers Know About "Knowing"?

Viewers wanting to see "Knowing" starring Nicholas Cage might expect a film not all that different from his "National Treasure" series or even perhaps "The Da Vinci Code" as from advertisements the story appears to center around an aged parchment with a series of numbers scribbled across it that seemingly predicts a series of disasters. However, by the film's conclusion, the apocalyptic symbolism alluded to is much more complex

and potentially confusing than one might initially suspect.

After a series of catastrophes Cage's astrophysicist character witnesses as a result of deciphering the cryptic document, one begins to get the impression that the transcendent presence guiding events is more of a tangible one rather than a force in the background. Hints of this are introduced when mysterious figures reminiscent of less than normal looking versions of Men In Black begin to stalk Cage's son as well as the granddaughter of the character who wrote down the prophetic string of numbers in a flashback set fifty years in the past.

In most films one usually gets a distinct impression as to the forces overseeing mankind's eschatological destiny. Usually they are traditionally supernatural or more in the vein of what moviegoers would consider extraterrestrial or interplanetary. Seldom do I remember a film where the distinctions were blurred or melded to such a degree as in "Knowing".

For example, viewers were first given a hint of this as Cage and one of the adolescents come across an illustration depicting Ezekiel's wheel within a wheel. The overt supernatural overtones continued to increase with interactions with the Men In Black, especially when a blinding lights emanates from one of their mouths when confronted by Cage and as Cage's partially deaf son picks up a message over his hearing aide from the "whispering people".

By the time of the movie's climactic act, Ezekiel's wheel within a wheel has descended to the rendezvous point where it has arrived to whisk the children under Cage's care to safety away from the earth endangered by a gigantic solar flare. Not even at this point did

screenwriters clarify where they came down theologically. For example, as Cage proceeded to board the craft, he was informed that only the chosen could enter.

Did this mean only those professing belief in God (about the best you can hope for from Hollywood as a positive ascent to the need for a relationship with Christ would be out of the question) since earlier in the film Cage's character hinted at lacking faith in a conscious divine power. Or more likely, were these tots suppose to be Indigo Children, a new classification of adolescent hypothesized to be the next step in human evolution as a way to explain a myriad of phenomena from such as why these children have IQ's higher than their parents to bratty teen behavior.

The distinction between garden variety extraterrestrial and angel is further blurred when these entities drop their humanoid facades to reveal themselves to be energy beings reminiscent of the Taelons from the early seasons of "Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict". The obfuscation continues until the end of the film.

As the craft carrying the two children away from the earth lifts into space, the viewer realizes that these two youngsters were not the only two saved as they join a convoy of similar vehicles. Once more, while the average viewer might be sitting there dumbfounded as to what is being depicted, the viewer peripherally in the know will wonder if they have just seen a space age interpretation of the Rapture where it is believed that the saved will be whisked away by God to safety before destruction comes upon the world or rather, as non-dispensationalists have hypothesized, or how the masses will be duped into a

pseudo-rapture orchestrated by so-called “flying saucers”.

Even after all of this, "Knowing" at its end dumps even deeper metaphysical symbolism upon the viewer to wade through. For after the earth is destroyed with the elements burning up with a fervent heat as foretold in II Peter 3:12, we see the children running through a field towards a very distinct looking tree that could very well be the Tree of Life. But as with other moments in this film, we are not given any definitive answer as to whether the children are in Heaven or merely on another planet.

Those that go into “Knowing” expecting a supernatural thriller will not be disappointed. However, what they may not know about is the symbolic dialogue regarding some of the most profound spiritual issues facing the world today.

Faith On The Final Frontier

“The final frontier” --- since the mid 1960’s these words have characterized *Star Trek*’s perception of the adventure and the discoveries to be found in the distant reaches of outer space. Yet can this vast interstellar ether really be said to be the final frontier in terms of providing an ultimate foundation or purpose? For despite all its wonder, at its core the cosmos is not that much different than ourselves in that its external composition is simply another manifestation or component of the physical universe.

Thus, no matter how far man might one day voyage beyond the confines of the earth, he will still require belief and value systems through which to process and

understand the role of the mysteries he is likely to encounter both within the human mind and those external to himself with which he has had little prior experience. Often the fields of science fiction and future studies are used as tools by which to forecast scientific and technological developments. However, in *Religion 2101 A.D.*, Hiley H. Ward shows these speculative methods can be used to gauge the form religion might take in the distant future.

According to Ward, the astounding breakthroughs of the future will force humanity to rethink the most basic of concepts as these will be stretched beyond traditional understandings in light of extraordinary circumstances and conditions. For example, Ward points out that the very concept of what it means to be human might be altered beyond current recognition. With the advent of artificial organs and the possibility of growing replacements in a laboratory, there could come a day when death might be delayed indefinitely.

Many would no doubt embrace existence as a cyborg (an organism half biological and half mechanical in its physiology) if the interchangeability of parts presented the likelihood of staving off the grim reaper as long as possible. Eventually, man might no longer have to endure the inherent limitations of an organic body as the range, perception and locomotion could be enhanced by directly interfacing the brain with a computer controlling an array of exploratory robotic sensors (28). In essence, some could live out their lives as a stationary central processing unit while their secondary android bodies simultaneously explored both the depths of the ocean and the peaks of Mars all at the same time.

Ward predicts that these kinds of innovations will spark profound renovations in man's religious consciousness. Faced with the overwhelming enormity of the universe, man may feel forced to cope with the daunting fruits of this exploration by downplaying his individuality by fully embracing his place as an insignificant cog in a machine. In biological and sociological sciences, this theory is known as "macro life", the propensity to view the individual in society as analogous to a single cell in an organism (30).

Such a framework places worth and value instead on the overall group as a whole. Ward foresees this prospect taking more concrete expression in the form of a hypothetical spaceship whose command decisions are arrived at by electronically tapping into the thoughts of the crew and melding these divergent consciousnesses into a single imperative authority greater than the sum of the component perspectives. Even though *Religion In 2101 AD* was published in 1975, this suggestion foreshadowed its fullest development in science fiction in the form of the collective consciousness of the Borg, the cybernetic aliens from *Star Trek* that perceive themselves as a single entity and who value the individual members of their society as little more than drones. This concept of all taken as a singular mind bears a striking similarity to pantheism in the realm of religious studies.

The diminution of individuality will not necessarily be heralded as a bad thing by those clamoring for its demise if it can be marketed as an elevation in consciousness as an ontological unification with the universal totality. There are few greater ego boosters, after all, than considering oneself God (or at least as some

tiny part of the divine intelligence).

Regarding this perception, Ward provides insightful comments from some of science fiction's most prominent names. *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry says, "Man will come to see himself properly as part of God. God is the sum of everything, all intelligence, all order in the universe...It is not inconceivable that as intelligent beings we are part of and ultimately become God, and ultimately create ourselves (Ward 136)." Harlan Ellison, author of *I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream*, adds to this perspective: "I guess I worship man. Each has the seed of God in himself (Ward, 136)."

While the religious philosophy of the future will strive to approach the majesty and wonder of outer realities by turning inward, many adherents of the coming cosmic confession will still feel the traditional need of experiencing the divine through a relationship with or by receiving guidance from what they perceive to be an intelligence or symbol objectively transcendent from themselves. Seldom can man pull himself up by his own metaphysical bootstraps.

But whereas the so-called God of old is seen as standing distinct from His creation but actively sustaining it by His loving hand and revealing His message through angels and prophets and later revealing Himself in the form of His Son Jesus Christ, the God of Tomorrowland will employ different couriers and manifest Himself in ways actually less personable. Erich Von Daniken in *Chariots Of The Gods* hypothesizes that UFO's and extraterrestrials may serve as an explanation for the supernatural phenomena occurring in ancient times when these harbingers of universal wisdom appeared bearing

enlightenment. Von Daniken does not believe in the traditional conception of a transcendent God. Rather he believes in a God composed of the sum of all knowledge in the universe, of which each individual is an autonomous piece of information akin to a bit within a computer to be reunified into the singular totality once the evolution to a state of pure energy has taken place (Ward, 129).

And speaking of computers, eschatologists might take note of the role of these devices in future religious thought as considered in dramatic speculative literature. One cannot dismiss such claims on the part of the likes of Hal Lindsay or Jack Van Impe as outright exaggeration. In David Gerrold's *When Harlie Was One*, the Graphic Omniscient Device (G.O.D.) is a supercomputer capable of solving all problems and answering all questions. In the novel *The Fall Of Colossus*, Colossus is a computer designed to administer functions on earth and is ultimately deified as part of a new religion. *Twilight Zone* creator Rod Serling observed, "...with increased dependence of technology, we will find ourselves worshipping at the altar of machines (Ward, 133)."

Ward does an impressive job culling through the religious insights found across an impressive array of objective analytical forecasts and fictional literary accounts. Yet it is in the final chapter where Ward synthesizes the observations found in the preceding study into his own narrative vignette that the reader gets the best feel for where these cultural trends might take humanity in the year 2101 AD. It is at this point the reader becomes most engrossed in the issues under consideration.

In the year 2101, humanity's major religion is the Church of the Celebration of the Holy World Cosmos

whose members are called “Celebrators”. Celebrators strive to embrace all the latest fads in religious thought and philosophy such as pantheism, extraterrestrial wisdom, theories of multiple Christs and avatars, and claim to value harmony and expansive tolerance above all else (Ward, 217).

The Celebrators are opposed by religious traditionalists derisively referred to as “Pewsitters” because of their insistence upon utilizing pews and other ancient religious traditions such as monotheism. The reader would initially suspect the Celebrators to be the heroes of the story since they are depicted as the vanguards of progressivism and enlightenment. However, the church to which they belong is as conniving as the most reactionary of ecclesiastical authorities.

Through an agreement worked out with the government, Celebrators are forbidden from traveling, must be free of political ambitions, and have their minds telepathically scanned to prevent disharmonious thoughts. Pewsitters forced to attend Celebrator services face possible disintegration by a laser beam if they disrupt the proceedings.

Despite the facade of technology and innovation surrounding the philosophy of religion underlying much of the science fiction addressing these kinds of questions, man cannot seem to escape his most basic requirements and desires --- no matter how much he might try to suppress them --- regarding his need for a personal God. In Isaac Asimov’s *Foundation Trilogy*, God or the “First Speaker” is depicted as a kindly, elderly gentleman who travels the universe helping where he is needed (Ward, 115).

Ward puts his own spin on this concept in his fictional vignette postulating a God dwelling anonymously among humanity as an inconspicuous New York cabbie. Fortunately, the Bible teaches that not only did a loving God come to dwell with men upon the earth in the form of His Son Jesus Christ but that He also provided for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life while He was here through His sacrificial death upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead. If that is not good enough for either the literati of speculative narrative or the mundane realist alike, that is their choice and they must live with the consequences.

When contemplating literary undertakings addressing the philosophy of religion, science fiction with its accompanying connotations of laser guns, rocketships, and creepy aliens does not initially come to mind. However, as Hiley Ward points out in *Religion 2101 AD*, this particular genre known for stretching the limits of perception can serve as an excellent conceptual mechanism through which to explore intimidating themes of belief we might otherwise be reluctant to approach.

***Sword Of The Lord* Columnist Insinuates Sci-Fi Fans Not Fit To Teach School**

For decades, the *Sword Of The Lord* has served as a voice of independent Christian Fundamentalism. This publication has fulfilled that mission by regularly standing its ground against the encroaching liberalism and modernism plaguing broad swaths of the Christian church.

One of the most interesting regular features of the

paper is “The News and Views” column by Dr. Hugh Pyle that usually applies Christian plain-spokenness to a number of items of public interest. However, in the October 21, 2005 issue of the *Sword Of The Lord*, Dr. Pyle goes beyond his normal commonsense to draw conclusions not supported by the evidence or deducible from it.

In his Oct 21, 2005 column, Dr. Pyle laments the poor example set by many contemporary public school educators and how in times past these guides along the path of learning imbued their students with a sense of spiritual as well as academic knowledge. As proof of his thesis, he cites a feature in his local paper where an interviewed teacher responded to a survey that his favorite movie was *Star Trek*.

Dr. Pyle responds, “You had better give your children all the education you can at home and in a good, fundamental church and Sunday school.” From his reaction, you’d think the teacher had admitted to having a stash of girlie videos. Would Dr. Pyle have said this had the teacher admitted to liking sports?

With all the nonsense going on in the public schools, you’d think that a teacher that enjoys *Star Trek* and related science fiction would be the least of any concerned citizen’s worries and might even be considered an asset on an academic faculty. For despite the moral shortcomings that pop up from time to time in the plots, over the course of its various incarnations, *Star Trek* has consistently remained one of the few expressions of popular culture to present itself as if ethical reflection actually mattered and was often essential to the story.

Dr. Pyle further laments, “Usually my teachers

were well read in good and great literature, which included the Bible, and it showed up in class.” And what exactly did this great literature consist of?

Shakespeare? It may come as a surprise, but the plays of Shakespeare were the *Star Trek* of their time because --- while we consider them highbrow literature today --- these dramas were performed primarily as popular entertainment. Paying homage to this tradition, *Star Trek* has often employed Shakespearean allusions and motifs throughout its history.

Though I cannot speak fully as to Dr. Pyle’s personal convictions about the matter, for a number of those operating in a closely related socioecclesiastical circle even literature produced by fellow Christians is not even good enough. For while most Christians were pleased about the attention given to C.S. Lewis as a result of the cinematic adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe* even if they had reservations about every last point in his systematic theology, more hardline pastors, scholars, and evangelists want Lewis roundly condemned on all counts rather than to sift the wheat from the chaff in what he has written and some come close to heaping damnation on anyone that dares crack open one of this professor’s books. One pastor in an audio sermon, in an attempt to scare Christians away from seeing the film, claims demons literally hovering in the theater might latch on to unsuspecting viewers (as if this won’t happen in most churches these days, many of the Fundamentalist ones included).

Others a bit more reasonable in their criticisms such as David Brown of the First Baptist Church of Oak Creek, Wisconsin claim C.S. Lewis is inappropriate for

Christians to read since Narnia is inhabited by creatures of a questionable spiritual pedigree such as centaurs, fauns, and witches. However, such insights fail to properly analyze classic Western fantasy literature.

Just because there is a witch in *The Chronicles Of Narnia* does not set off the Harry Potter alarm. Unlike Rowling, Lewis conforms to traditional literary aesthetics by casting the witch in the role of the antagonist or villain.

The most thoroughgoing separationists ---- the term in this sense meaning those that choose not to ecclesiastically affiliate with those of differing religious viewpoints rather than those misinterpreting the First Amendment --- contend that Lewis must still be avoided since to have a witch in a story in any capacity is a violation of II Corinthians warning the Christian to touch not the unclean thing.

If that's the case, then what are Patch The Pirate Clubs doing in numerous Fundamentalist churches? In much the same manner as Rowling has glamorized witchcraft, numerous churches have romanticized the life of high-seas piracy.

Potter critics rightly point out there is no such thing as a good witch. Likewise, there is no such thing as a good pirate.

Why not just organize Jack The Carjacker Clubs for kids since that's what pirates essentially were in the Age of Sail. Better yet, why not update things for the current millennium and start Tommy The Terrorist Clubs?

At least Lewis had the decency to cast the witch as the villain. What's the excuse for this strand of Fundamentalism that demands every last detail be in apple pie order or they'll bring the legitimacy of your Christian

faith into question? Pirates have probably ruined as many innocent lives and possibly even more than the average witch ever has.

If every character in every story abided by every last behavioral norm and stricture insisted upon by many Fundamentalists, frankly there'd hardly be any literature worth reading. This does not mean though that a book must be filled with promiscuity or profanity to be interesting.

To these critics, even the most wholesome classics uncomfortably push the limits of acceptability. According to Kevin Swanson of Generations Radio, *Little House On The Prairie* suborns lesbianism since Laura Ingalls Wilder dared to exhibit a bit of an independent streak; I guess Half-pint was too tomboyish or spoke her mind one too many times for old Pa Swanson's tastes.

As evidence, Swanson cites Laura's refusal to say "obey" in her wedding vows. However, it must be remembered that these are simply a cultural manifestation of a Biblical imperative and despite popular conceptions to the contrary aren't spelled out verbatim in the pages of holy writ.

No *Chronicles Of Narnia*. No *Little House On The Prairie*. Doesn't exactly leave much to read and from the literary theories expounded by these pious ascetics, it's a wonder they still let the good Christian read the Bible. For while David might have been a man after God's own heart, there's a goodly portion of his life you'd hardly want your children emulating.

Perhaps some Christians are too quick to embrace C.S. Lewis in his entirety without casting a discerning eye on those areas where he did come up short. But if that is

the case, these overly-exacting members of the clergy have themselves to blame in large part.

For if these divines find contemporary speculative fiction to be inappropriate if it does not adhere to their particular systematic theologies on every point, are they themselves doing anything to produce acceptable alternative narratives, sagas, and epics? Furthermore, are they actively encouraging the bright young minds in their congregations to pursue artistic or literary callings. Because from what I have studied of and experienced from those of this particular Evangelical perspective, most have adopted a proto-Romanist mindset that those possessing a religionist vocation are somehow more important than the rest of us and the work of such sanctified journeymen more essential to the fulfillment of God's good purposes. That's why in many churches, Christian schools, and youth groups one hears an awful lot about becoming a missionary to the heathen savages in some far off jungle but precious little about targeting the barbarians that are taking over this culture and trying to undue the consequences of godless thinking upon our own institutions of thought and learning.

Interestingly though, the *Sword of the Lord* does not hold a consistent position against all forms entertainment. For while fans of science fiction aren't fit to teach and a Christian had better not dare go to a movie since even the money from more wholesome motion pictures is likely to flow into the coffers of reprobates, the staff at the *Sword of the Lord* gets as googoo-eyed around celebrities as the remainder of the population and turn a blind eye when it suits their fancy to the exacting standards of deportment usual insisted upon by the

publication.

Featured in the top-left corner of the December 20, 2005 edition is a profile of outdoor sports host Chad Schearer. In his testimony, Chad tells of being invited to a NASCAR race by one of the stockcar owners. If the *Sword of the Lord* is to be consistent, shouldn't this individual be chastised and disfellowshipped for going somewhere where alcohol, scantily clad women, and profanity are bound to be present?

As outcast in Christian circles these days as I am among the heathen, I don't have much of any moral qualms about motorsports. However, I am not the one whose publication is insinuating one is some kind of deviant if one likes laser guns and spaceships and calling into question the legitimacy of one's Christianity for occasionally associating with conservative Southern Baptists or level-headed Charismatics.

However, I guess if you are part of the "in crowd", you don't necessarily have to abide by the rules and standards derived from a particular interpretation of God's Word the common believer in the pew is expected to adhere to. For you see, Chad's pappy is pals with the editor.

Furthermore, if Christians are suppose to stay away from works of imaginative speculation such as *Star Trek* and *The Chronicles Of Narnia*, how is it that these pastors and evangelists know so much about them? Unlike some things one knows to be inherently wrong by their mere existence, to nitpick these narratives on a nuanced doctrinal level one is going to have to sit there and study them for awhile.

Therefore, if preachers are going to address the

issue from pulpit and pen, doesn't the admonishment to be a Berean compel us to do our own first hand research since in the Protestant tradition one is not to blithely accept the ruminations of the clergy without some kind of collaboration through the application of one's own critical thinking skills to what has been postulated by those holding ecclesiastical office. If anything, by speaking out against imaginative literature, pastors should rather be pleased then when members of their congregations go to research these works for themselves.

Out-Of-Work Sci-Fi Writer, Will Work for Story Ideas: Technology May Be Outpacing Limits Of Imagination & Ethics

If technological progress continues at its current pace, most authors of science fiction may soon find themselves out of work as science seems ready to surpass the ingenuity of speculative fantasy literature.

From a plot straight out of a movie or novel, a cult that worships extraterrestrials hopes to be the first to produce a cloned baby.

According to the *Sunday Times of London*, the Raelian movement through the auspices of its Clonaid corporation plans to produce a duplicate of a ten months old baby boy who died during an operation. So from a certain naturalistic perspective, one might say these scientists hope to bring about the child's "resurrection", if

you will.

This story is quite newsworthy in itself. However, a closer examination of those behind this effort provides pivotal insight into the forces at work in the world today and their possible implications upon the future.

Clonaid's attempt at human cloning will be as much a religious sacrament for the group as a scientific accomplishment. According to the *Sunday Times*, the Raelian movement believes human beings were themselves originally genetically engineered by extraterrestrials.

The movement's webpage claims that in 1973 Claude Vorilhon met an extraterrestrial who revealed to him that life on earth was, in the words of the group's official statement, "not the work of an immaterial God, nor the result of random evolution."

Rather terrestrial life is the work of the "Elohim". Bible scholars will notice this Hebrew word for God. Vorilhon contends the word has been mistranslated and more accurately means "those who came from the sky." Upon receiving this revelation, Vorilhon changed his name to "Rael", meaning "messenger of the Elohim".

Raelians also hope to establish an official embassy welcoming extraterrestrials to earth. They also reject the Book of Revelation, and for good reason as we shall discover later.

However, one does not necessarily have to turn to Bible prophecy to see where the implications of this story are possibly leading.

Viewers of the science fiction drama "Earth: Final Conflict" will note the similarity of the name adopted by the movement's chief seer, "Rael", with an alien character

on the show named "Mael" who played a similar role in bringing extraterrestrial wisdom to mankind.

But from here, "Earth: Final Conflict" becomes more of an indictment against the Raelian movement than an advertisement for it. In a move paralleling Raelian teaching, the Talons, or "Companions" as they prefer to be called, arrive on earth in a spirit of peace and goodwill.

Such beneficence turns out to be merely a ruse since the true intentions of the Talons are to subjugate the earth and experiment on mankind, manipulating humanity into the Talons' ongoing conflict with another alien species known as the Jaridians.

In pursuit of this end, over the course of the series, the Talons placed cyber-viral implants into the minds of humans for purposes of control and genetically engineered clones referred to as "bio-surrogates" into which personalities could be downloaded from other bodies as well as attempted to produce human/alien hybrids in an attempt to solve the problem of their own infertility. There was even an early episode dealing with a "Church of the Companions" that worshipped the aliens, but little ever came of this potentially fruitful plot; one almost wonders now if it might have stepped on one too many toes.

Most would dismiss the Raelians as silly and any insight available through "Earth: Final Conflict" as escapist entertainment. It would seem, however, that extraterrestrial theologies and UFO religions are on the rise and increasing in influence.

Several years ago, the Heaven's Gate Cult committed mass suicide, thinking that leaving their earthly "containers" would beam them up to a spacecraft trailing the Hale-Bopp Comet. Scientology, the religion founded

by science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard, believes human beings are reincarnated space aliens. This particular sect is prominent among the Hollywood elite, with John Travolta and Tom Cruise perhaps being the most prominent adherents.

Yet this worldview placing extraterrestrials on the throne of heaven once occupied by God is not confined to the less educated fringe of society. It is becoming increasingly popular among society's so-called "sophisticated" who cannot stomach submitting to an omnipotent God as the source of all morals and creation.

The director of the Raelian movement's Clonaid project, Brigitte Boisselier, holds two doctorates and teaches college level chemistry. Others just as educated but perhaps not as quick to embrace the mystical ramifications of New Age theology are coming to accept the idea that life on earth is the product of intelligence beyond this planet. This is because naturalistic science needs a new alternative in light of probability declaring evolution an impossibility.

In scientific circles, the idea that life on earth developed in outer space is referred to as "panspermia" and is advocated by no less a scientific luminary as Francis Crick, co-discoverer of DNA.

But despite such stellar credentials, panspermia still doesn't cut it. For even if it were true, it only moves the need for God back one step. Even if man was manufactured aboard a flying saucer, it does not explain where the little green Martians came from. Eventually you're going to run up against the need for an unmoved mover originally discussed by Aristotle and given a more Christian form by Thomas Aquinas.

Unfortunately, history teaches that those unwilling to admit their sin and need for salvation through Jesus Christ are impervious to sound theological logic regardless of the consequences. And it might not be too far fetched that cloning and UFO theology might have a role to play in end times prophecy.

In a blasphemous attempt to imitate Jesus, the Anti-Christ might be brought about by a false virgin birth by being engineered in a laboratory as the perfect human specimen. Or upon receiving the head wound mentioned in Revelation 13, the Anti-Christ could be "resurrected" by being cloned or having his spirit "downloaded" into an additional body kept in cryogenic storage for just such an emergency.

Demons masquerading as extraterrestrials promoting New Age religion and philosophy could come forward to take responsibility for the Rapture, claiming that Christians upon the earth at the time had to be removed for the sake of mankind's evolutionary development.

Such scenarios are merely a possibility of how certain eschatological events might unfold in light of current philosophical, theological, and technological developments. To many, such a course of events seems highly unlikely. But then again, who among us as little as five years ago would have thought clones and UFO cults would come to the forefront as legitimate news items in reputable journalistic sources?

Culture Wars: The Multicultural Menace

Part of the appeal of the *Star Wars* saga no doubt arises in the struggle of its protagonists against a pervasive tyranny literally of galactic proportions. It seems that same spirit of totalitarianism may be seeping off the big screen and into the down-to-earth world of everyday life.

In his commentary "George Lucas: Closet Racist", columnist Gregory Hand examined the ludicrous response by the diversity racket protesting "Attack of the Clones", the second installment of the newest trilogy. While these sentiments might gain a hearing in the press as they did in the *Detroit News* and notoriety for academics of questionable sanity, such statements actually reveal considerable ignorance of the *Star Wars* narrative. It might be best if these professional agitators actually tried to understand the intricacies of the *Star Wars* universe instead of looking for an excuse to throw a racial hissy fit.

Much of the criticism centers around the so-called clone army that become the infamous storm troopers in ensuing episodes. Fans learn in "Attack of the Clones" that this army is composed of replicants engineered from the bounty hunter Jango Fett.

But this protest is not the result of putting genetic engineering in a bad light. Instead, it is about minority pandering and racial histrionics. Had Whites resorted to this degree of stereotyping there would have been an outcry louder than Chewbacca's growl.

One of the disgruntled complained that the Fetts looked "totally Latino" and were thus a not-so-subtle slur against Hispanics. Such comments reveal a racial insensitivity that would make a Grand Wizard blush.

The actor portraying Jango is from New Zealand

and actually part Maori, a group native to that island country. Seems these brown ones really all do look alike -- if we buy into the multiculturalist mindset.

These minions of political correctness are as two-faced as Darth Maul's double-edged lightsaber. In the past, racial beancounters nitpicked at Lucas for not including enough minorities in prominent roles. Gregory Hand points out that these so-called thinkers labeled the first trilogy "the Ku Klux Klan fantasy of the future". Now that Lucas has given minorities more pivotal parts, he's hounded endlessly for that.

It seems then that the sole purpose of these disgruntled racialists is that of perpetual bickering. For as good as Star Wars is, one would think the series to be the epic of their dreams.

To those on the left unable to see anything beyond human skin pigmentation, the protagonists of the *Star Wars* narrative are a collection of sentient species from across the cosmos. Admiral Akkbar from *Return of the Jedi* was essentially a giant talking lobster. Mace Windu is Black and head of the Jedi Council. What more do they want?

The Imperial forces, on the other hand, in the movies at least were exclusively Caucasian, and the only exception that comes to mind in the so called "expanded universe" is Grand Admiral Thrawn, the blue-skinned, red-eyed figure who steps forward in the Timothy Zahn novel *Heir to the Empire* to lead the Empire several years after the Battle of Endor.

Of course, I guess the problem the multiculturalists have with the heroes of Star Wars is that they have all set their interplanetary differences aside in the pursuit of

fighting for one common cause, namely either the preservation of the Galactic Republic or the overthrow of the diabolical Empire. In order to meet their standards of an acceptable fantasy, I guess Yoda would have to demand that everyone else adopt his own twisted sentence structure or at least receive a government subsidy to preserve his unique linguistic identity. Or perhaps the robots R2-D2 and C-3PO would lead a protest demanding that the galactic university establish a droid studies program or encourage others of their computerized kind to unionize for better wages and working conditions.

Much of this criticism surrounding Lucas' storytelling technique stems from his use of vocal accent and the parallels these might have in actual terrestrial cultures. What of it?

The movies are known as "Star Wars" after all. If not for the conflict and tension reminiscent of our own geostrategic situation, would anyone watch these movies? Frankly I'm not going to dish out seven bucks to watch what would amount to PBS in space with Darth Oprah imposing interstellar sensitivity training upon all falling beneath her control.

Applying these radical complaints to other cinematic genres, you could never make another war movie for fear of some minority group being offended. Already this mindset is seeping into other films. In *The Sum of All Fears*, as interesting as the multinational fascist conspiracy was when its leader pontificated on the state of the world today and his own philosophy of history, it was reported that Tom Clancy's original vision was altered to spare typically delicate Arab sensitivities

Often we are told movies must graphically depict

sexuality outside of marriage and other similar forms of debauchery because these things go on in the real world. So do conflicts between nations and assorted political entities.

Why should we care if Jar Jar Binks is a Caribbean caricature or that the Niimodian Trade Federation metaphorically represents the threat posed by Asia's growing power and influence? No one cares that Emperor Palpatine is supposed to be based on Richard Nixon, that Darth Vader is a failed Christ since he was born of a virgin, or that (if you take these hyperracial heuristics to their logical conclusion) that the Empire could be taken as a slur against Whites.

If all these people have to worry about is some movie most watch to see the dogfights in space or Yoda doing a back-flip, things must be pretty good here in America after all and the only way for them to take control is to pull a Darth Sidious and manufacture the crises propelling them into power.

Two There Always Are: But Who Is A Jedi & Who Is A Sith?

Throughout the *Star Wars* saga, fans have been led to believe that the Jedi stood for justice and goodness throughout the galaxy. However, the actions of one of the characters renowned as the embodiment of the principles expounded by the sect compels such an assumption to undergo careful reevaluation.

Most no doubt think I am referring to Anakin Skywalker since the final installment of the series details

his transformation into Darth Vader. However, I am actually referring to Yoda, the diminutive space troll so hideous he is actually kind of cute.

In a Pepsi commercial, the Jedi master is seen sitting at a lunch counter here on earth. But instead of politely waiting to order his lunch like a good little elf, he instead resorts to a level of trickery that would put Q from *Star Trek* to shame.

Yoda employs Jedi sorcery by casting a spell on the guy next to him to give Yoda his fries. The victim complies, but when the imp tries to exert his will to acquire a disputed Pepsi, the victim reasserts himself to retain ownership of the coveted soft drink.

While the commercial is somewhat humorous, it also gives us a bit of clairvoyance into the moral worldview of the Jedi. In the final analysis, the Jedi end up not being all that different than the Sith.

For starters, anybody thinking there is nothing unsettling about a psionic adept waving their hands and getting a weak-minded subject to fork over whatever the space swami desires is in for a rude awakening. Some might think it's a joke, saying those under a Jedi's sway get exactly what they deserve.

But if Jedi are allowed to roam the cosmos pilfering what they please, what's to prevent one with more ambitious appetites from using his powers of beguilement to have his way with unsuspecting space damsels? Can't very well cry rape when you approve of soft drinks being taken from those under psychic manipulation when someone with a bit more force flowing through them uses their powers in a slightly more provocative manner. Just because Yoda's 800 and some years old doesn't mean the

rest of the Jedi have as much trouble extending their lightsabers.

Those with the power to take advantage of the common people in this kind of manner should be controlled by a strict code of behavior. Though the system proved inadequate, at least on *Babylon 5* the earth government had an agency known as the PsiCorps to regulate telepaths from infringing upon the privacy of so-called “mundanes” or normal people.

At least J. Michael Stravinski had the foresight to realize power no matter how well controlled or intentioned is going to end up being abused. Apparently Lucas is naive as Jar Jar Binks in having no similar worries about one person crawling around in the mind of another and seeing it as something to encourage as positive by making it a practice his heroes engage in with shocking regularity.

The principles and aphorisms espoused by the Jedi sound noble upon an initial hearing but end up justifying larcenous behavior. For example, throughout the recent trilogy, Jedi elites such as Yoda remind that fear of loss is a path to the Dark Side.

I guess such is taught so --- as with the elites of our own little corner of the universe such as government revenueurs and welfare bureaucrats --- the Jedi can take whatever they want and dare anyone to say anything about it. For shouldn't it be a greater wrong to take something that doesn't belong to you than to not want what is rightfully yours taken away?

One statement from “Revenge Of The Sith” that stands out to the philosophically sensitive is Obi-Wan's declaration that only a Sith lord deals in absolutes (an

absolute itself, by the way). But even if the proclamation is taken at face value, then how can one even say there is any difference between Jedi and Sith since distinctions cannot be made in a moral universe where absolutes are said not to exist?

The last installment of the *Star Wars* epic is marketed as depicting Anakin Skywalker's betrayal of the Jedi. But perhaps instead of betraying this sect of mystic galactic warriors, Darth Vader represents that cult's ultimate fulfillment.

Will Lois Lane Be An Unwed Mother In New Superman Film?

In DVD's I have of the classic Max Fleischer Superman cartoons, Lois Lane is depicted as the embodiment of American femininity as she carries herself simultaneously with spunk and ladylike decorum.

As the foremost expression of American popular culture, the changes in Superman over the years can be used to map the extent of the nation's moral decline.

For example, in the current *Smallville* series, the females of this subset of the DC comics universe no longer adorn themselves like the classy dames of the 1940's or even the elegant look of Margot Kidder or Annette O'Toole in the movies of the 1980's but rather drink and whore around with the best of them all the while leaving little to the imagination as to the appearance of their bellies and lower backs.

Now it seems the saga of this hero flying high for truth, justice, and the American way might be crash

landing into perdition as a SciFi.com scifiwire story seems to indicate that Lois Lane might have an out of wedlock child in the upcoming film.

If this is what now passes as upright American womanhood nowadays, we might be so bad off that even Superman is unable to save us. Frankly, not even Superman should be expected to take responsibility for another man's indiscretions. Having been unable to exercise restraint in these matters, the best Ms. Lane should be able to hope for is a second-tier costumed adventurer such as Reed Richards, who has already had a child himself, or his brother-in-law the Human Torch, who has already been divorced.

Superman is superman, after all. He can have any woman he wants. Why should he settle for one that's already been marked as someone else's property and on top of that one that treats him like bilge when he's disguised as Clark Kent?

If it was the other way around and someone ignored Wonder Woman when she had a little librarian outfit on but threw themselves at her drooling all over her when she stripped down to that bosomy patriotic number she pours herself into, fans would insist she move on to someone that cared more for her as a person with mind and feelings and all that other sensitivity blather. Why doesn't Superman deserve the same? Don't tell me broads aren't into looks as much a dude.

If filmmakers are going to keep insisting that Superman must continue to change in order to reflect the times in which we live, one wonders how many more decades will pass until a version is released where Luthor is the hero and Superman the villain if the Man of

Tomorrow continues to insist upon imposing his standards upon common criminals and would be galactic conquerors.

As in regards to my columns daring to question Harry Potter and certain ethical undertones of the Star Wars universe, some (even many so-called "Conservatives") will dismiss me as a lunatic and a greater danger to the world than the most wicked of supervillians. Those that do should not go crying when their children come home practicing witchcraft or as teenage parents if we are to now smile upon these practices as wholesome in what should be the innocent realms of the imagination.

Lines Between Hero & Villain Increasing Blurred In Speculative Fantasy

Once upon a time in comic books and other forms of science fiction, the really memorable villains such as Darth Vader, Cobra Commander, Q from Star Trek, and even Baltar from the original Battlestar Galactica were bold and upfront with their ultimatums. Such characters wore their egomania with pride and in a way with a touch of class as one had little difficulty in understanding exactly where they stood. However, those in the real world trying to take over are usually much more subtle, even utilizing the guise of heroism in the attempt to get unsuspecting viewers and readers to swallow their message.

One of the most beloved characters of all speculative fiction is no doubt Superman as it has been

claimed that the only figures as well known are Mickey Mouse and Jesus Christ. Often referred to as the Big Blue Boy Scout in the pages of the comics, much of the character's appeal no doubt lies in his unflinching attempt to uphold virtue and protect the innocent no matter the cost to himself.

Throughout much of the character's history, the Man of Tomorrow's credo was summarized by the inspirational slogan, "Truth, Justice, and the American Way." However, the installment of the franchise *Superman Returns* has been repackaged to embrace postmodern sensibilities. Lois Lane is presented as a skank having spawned an out of wedlock child with the matter of paternity up, up and away as it was not spelled out beyond a shadow of a doubt whether Superman was the father (giving "The Man Of Steel" a whole new meaning centered around those bright red tights and if so casting his whole hero image into doubt as he is even a bigger dead beat dad than Darth Vader as the Bible says that he who does not take care of his own children is worse than an infidel).

Screenwriters Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris told the *Hollywood Reporter* that, in these multicultural and international times, it would be unconscionable to present the Last Son of Krypton as an American. After all, Superman is not an American since he is from outer space (in other words, it is unacceptable to expect aliens -- either earthbound or from beyond the stars --- we were gracious enough to let settle here to acclimate to our specific values and way of life) and that Kal-El is "here for humanity".

Since when was the last time humanity as a whole

did anything for anybody? Frankly, could Superman be anything other than an American and (shall we say) still fly?

A French Superman would fly away at the first sign of trouble. A Mexican Superman would come here looking for a handout and cry racism when we did not translate everything into Kryptonian. A Chinese Superman would probably expect those rescued to pay for the service. From history, we've already seen what would result from a German Superman. And a United Nations Superman would get bogged down all day in committee and embezzle millions while raping underage girls at night.

The screenwriters claimed, "We were hesitant to include the term 'American way' because the meaning of that today is somewhat uncertain." If life here in the USA is so odious, I hope they will be consistent and forego the billions likely to accrue in box office receipts, DVD sales, and related merchandising since the returns will be calculated in terms of tainted American currency. Better yet, maybe they can take the films openly homosexual director and set up residence in one of those centers of enlightened Third World tolerance such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, or Taliban-controlled parts of Afghanistan.

Both the writers and the director agreed that "American way" is a loaded and antiquated expression. If you are going to be that postmodern about it, why not toss out truth and justice while you are at it?

For if Superman cannot impose the American way on anyone, he can't very well stand up for the other virtues of truth (he spends half his time concealing it by not admitting that Clark Kent and Superman are really

one-and-the-same) and until he gets that child support paid isn't he by definition evading justice? If Superman is to be divorced from his American context, he is also removed thusly from the Judeo-Christian worldview upon which the milieu despised by the elites is ostensibly based.

From the standpoint of such free-floating ethical autonomy, one could very well argue he is actually the villain of the story imposing his morality upon those of weaker ability and Luthor the hero as he struggles to rid the world of this extraterrestrial menace so that humanity might be free to actualize its inner self. Granted, Luthor might be a homicidal egomaniac, but if fear of offending is to be the overriding principle inspiring speculative fiction as suggested by the Prime Directive from *Star Trek*, who are we to say homicidal egomania is wrong?

For being a medium built largely on a need for timeless values and the propriety of the hero doing everything within his power to defend these ideals, comic books and related fantastic tales as of late have been manipulated by subversives in their attempts to undermine the principles that made such tales of action and adventure a staple of American popular culture. For example, in decades past, one had to stretch credulity to insinuate something sordid might be going on between Batman and Robin.

However, these days one does not have to read into the text that which is not there in order to titillate one's prurient interests. Now, in the Batwoman storyline it's all spelled out for you that the character is a lesbian.

Other politically correct alterations are not spelled out as blatantly but are there to alter perceptions

nonetheless.

For example, to fans of the Superfriends --- a classic cartoon of the 70's and 80's based somewhat on the Justice League of America from DC Comics --- one of the most memorable seasons pitted the team against a rival organization composed of their archenemies known as the Legion of Doom. Among this rogues roster ranked a villain known as Black Manta who, though it was not brought out so much in the TV series as in the comics, was a Black nationalist that patterned his underwater battle-armor along the lines of a manta ray (hence the name).

With the dawn of a new millennium and no doubt because most of the fans of the original series have grown up, Cartoon Network brought a revamped version of the Superfriends known as Justice League back to television more in keeping with the spirit of the actual comics (i.e. Batman being depicted more in keeping with his true character as an aloof individualist rather than as disturbingly group oriented). Note also how "America" has been dropped from the title of this production as well.

Yet despite a desire to be more faithful to the original source material, in the latest incarnation of the Legion of Doom storyline, the Black Manta character has conveniently been renamed "Devil Ray", no doubt in an attempt to placate hypersensitive tolerancemongers. It is claimed that by retaining negative connotations assorted with "black", young folks watching the program might have their racial sensitivities thrown out of kilter.

If we now have live in an age where we have to go about tiptoeing on eggshells that thin, why stop here? Might Satanists object to the name "Devil Ray" as it casts

the Lord Of Darkness in a bad light? And what about the feelings of the stingray preservation people? Surely, such a name will unduly prejudice viewers against largely peaceful cartilaginous bottom feeders of the shark family.

Furthermore, if we are to be forced so much racial sensitivity to the point where fans and viewers just about want to gag from hearing the old “for the sake of the children” routine, aren’t we doing them a disservice by casting minorities in nothing but a positive light? In light of criticisms that the original Superfriends was not diverse enough despite having a Hispanic (El Dorado), a Black (Black Vulcan), an American Indian (Apache Chief), a Japanese (Samurai), and let’s not forget the Wonder Twins (whose complexions and pointed ears made them look like Spock and Uhura got married and started a family) who replaced the White kids from the first season, Justice League creators decided to go with African-American Green Lantern John Stewart rather than the better-known Hal Jordan.

Since the program is otherwise racially balanced in that Caucasian heroes such as Batman and Caucasian villains such as Lex Luthor show that individuals of this particular ethnic background are capable of both good and evil, don’t producers (if we are to adhere to the quota system of morality) have an obligation (for the sake of the children) to depict minority villains since producers have more than gone out of their way to highlight minority heroes? After all, isn’t to say a Black person is not capable of evil just about saying they aren’t really people at all?

No one is really going to get hurt one way or the other if the name of a particular secondary character is

slightly altered. However, not all changes to Saturday morning classics will have repercussions as innocuous in nature.

Apart from the Superfriends, perhaps one of the best loved cartoons to come out of the 1980's was *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero*. Even this former epitome of patriotic vigor and manhood has forsaken its ties to the United States.

Not only has the classic theme song been dropped but in the latest version of the series, *G.I. Joe: Sigma Six* (where the characters look more like junior highschoolers than adults), in one episode it was not Old Glory distinctively shown flying over G.I. Joe headquarters but rather the olive-branch emblazoned banner of the United Nations. What child is going to be inspired to love of country and strong national defense upon seeing that snot rag flapping in the breeze?

Sadly, this is not the only ethical malaise to settle over this boyhood classic over the past few years. Within the memorable theme song was a bit of narration that set the tone of the show (kind of like the “to boldly go” bit from *Star Trek*) that described the mission of G.I. Joe which was “to protect human freedom from Cobra, a ruthless terrorist organization determined to rule the world.”

From the alteration to the intro to the version of the toys sold a few years ago largely at Wal-Mart, it seems that Cobra (one of the most interesting associations of villains this side of the Galactic Empire from *Star Wars*) isn't what it use to be either. For instead of being categorized as a “ruthless terrorist organization”, the threat from Cobra has been downgraded to that of merely

an “evil organization” ranking it more with the ACLU or the Democratic Party rather than Al Qaeda.

From such a reassessment, one is forced to ask if this was done for the benefit of Cobra Commander or Osama Bin Laden? For example, did so-called “diversity experts” and behavioral psychologists who get hefty fees as sensitivity consultants suggest this reclassification because they did not want children to identify Bin Laden and his boys as villainous as you will find a number of relativists insisting still that we should not view such violent radicals as evil? Or was the recharacterization of Cobra suggested for the sake of Cobra Commander, Destro, and Serpentor since some might argue that young children should not have their imaginative play burdened by such weighty concerns as the real world?

But if children do not come to grips with the existence of terrorism in the more benign world of make-believe, won’t their minds be more likely to shatter if they are sheltered from it until the day they get their voting card? The nymphomaniacs in the sex education racket insist children must be told of the most lewd peculiarities of human sexuality as soon as they set foot inside a kindergarten classroom. Surely the minds of boys on the verge of adolescence when their interest in things military is beginning to awaken will not be eternally scared if the term “terrorist” comes into the framework of their imaginative play.

Some might dismiss concerns about Superman and related characters as the ravings of some kind of lunatic. However, as Superman goes, so goes the nation. For as the embodiment of American values for thousands of impressionable children and young adults, the errors of the

Man of Steel in one generation will no doubt become the accepted deviances of the next.

Nothing Will Be Restrained From Them

Genesis 11:6 says, “And the Lord said, ‘Behold the people is one and they all have one language; and this they began to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.’” The Lord was speaking in reference to the Tower of Babel built by the followers of Nimrod a short while after the Deluge so his followers might make a name for themselves in a prideful manner. To prevent this blasphemous arrogance from getting out of hand, God confused the languages so the people would disperse across the face of the earth.

The account does more than chronicle the origins of languages, nations, and races. It, in fact, serves as a warning of the trouble mankind can get into when the species comes together and pools its resources in total unity.

While such an assertion might have been dismissed years ago, today as the world draws together as one here at the conclusion of history as it did nearer to the beginning, we see the warning coming to pass in relation to various technological developments.

Take the issues of human cloning and genetic engineering for example. These new sciences could very well be seen as a modern Tower of Babel.

These techniques are not only being considered to ease the suffering of disease but to also tailor humanity to

its own liking. In essence, this is one of modern man's attempts to lift himself above the heavens in a manner similar to that of our ancient forebears gathered on the plain of Shinar.

Not only can prospective parents turn to this technology to prevent their children from suffering from debilitating conditions such as epilepsy or Alzheimer's but they can also tinker with traits such as hair color and sex and perhaps even enhance aptitudes such as intelligence and athletic ability. Eventually, parents refusing to utilize such technology beyond the alleviation of illness could come to be seen as negligent or abusive in the eyes of lawmakers and social engineers.

Having imbibed heartily of the spirit of Babel, for some even this is not enough. Throughout much of world history, those seeking to make a name for themselves in the manner described in Genesis 11:6 were content to revel in the wonders and accomplishments of man on an exaggerated scale.

But as technology continues to advance and the world continues to unify, for an emerging worldview known as Transhumanism being human is no longer enough as adherents of this new outlook seek to surpass the limitations of the species through cybernetics or genetic enhancements. Such thinkers will not stop at Hitler's *Urbemensch* but will prefer something even far more sinister akin to the Borg from *Star Trek* or humans crossbred with animal DNA resulting in hybrids similar to *The Thundercats* of 1980's cartoon fame.

The skeptical might dismiss such speculation as impossible. But we only need to look back over the history of the twentieth century to see the improbable has

had an uncanny way of becoming reality. For example, it was one time thought it was impossible to travel faster than the speed of sound.

Just imagine what other horrors of his own creation await mankind down the road as this truly seems to be an age where “...nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.”

Scientists Suggest Bestiality

A comical reworking of "Happy Birthday To You" ends, "You look like a monkey and you act like one too."

If certain scientists have their way, that ditty might very well come to be seen as something akin to a racial slur.

It is reported that researchers from MIT and Harvard are contending that, millions of years ago, early humans and chimps got down and dirty with a little interspecies hanky-panky.

Such unions produced fecund offspring that introduced genes from both species into the respective genomes.

Some might dismiss such speculation as idle academic babbling, however, such theorizing will serve as the background of future policy and social thought.

To most of us, chimps and humans getting together seems so bizarre it sounds like eharmony meets Planet of the Apes. Yet for years rumors have circulated that mixed creatures known as "humanzees" have been engineered behind the closed doors of laboratories where the only standards adhered to are the twisted imaginations of the mad scientists that lurk in the shadows of such places.

It has been claimed that Stalin dreamed of an army of hybrid ape-men to impose Communism upon the world. In China during the Cultural Revolution, it has been alleged one of these monstrosities was killed before it could be born.

However, such experiments are not confined to the godless Communists across the sea. It has been claimed one such hybrid was born at Yerkes National Primate Research Center but destroyed shortly after birth.

But whether or not these incidents have actually occurred, what there is no debate about is that there are those in scientific and philosophical circles bent on undermining the distinctions between man and beast.

Ethicist Peter Singer, who believes it is permissible for parents to kill their infant children, argues that the great apes should be granted what we currently call "human rights".

Though it is another issue entirely, already things have gotten to the point where a person reluctant to endorse courtship and marriage outside their respective race or ethnic group puts themselves in the position of social sanctions being imposed upon them such as when Bob Jones University stuck to the beliefs of its founders rather than change its position simply because the government told them to in the name of tolerance and diversity. Just imagine the condemnation that will be heaped upon those insisting upon the integrity of the species in a world where the very word "person" will be greeted with the same revulsion reserved today for the vilest of slurs and terms of superiority.

Won't take that little cute red-headed orang gal to the prom? Why you are so prejudiced, its off to the

reeducation camp for cognitive reconditioning for you, you wretched conservative.

Many enjoy "The X-Men" as an allegory analyzing the ramifications of the acceptance of human beings and the dangers of ethnocentrism. Viewers might want to consider it more as a literal depiction of the horrors that await mankind if we continue to allow our technical advancement to take humanity into ethical realms best not trodden upon.

Civic Duty To Read Harry Potter

Normally, I would be reluctant in encouraging someone to read an occult-laced tract like Harry Potter as one has to judge for themselves whether such material might be harmful to their spiritual walk. However, in a case where a Canadian supermarket inadvertently released the text ahead of its debut date, those getting their hands on it now have a civic duty to read the manuscript in order to take a stand against government intrusion into our minds and homes.

A Justice with the Supreme Court of British, Columbia has ruled that those acquiring the book ahead of time must not speak about the book, copy it, or even read it. Furthermore, the lucky customers must also surrender the book they purchased in good faith to the publisher until 12:01 am, July 16th when the dark lords of the New World Order have decreed their obedient minions among the ranks of mere mortals may finally gaze upon this work of juvenile necromancy.

Apart from its glorification of Satanic rituals,

numerous Christian thinkers have warned of the Potter Series because of Harry's tendency to break the rules when it suits his purpose. Since this is the worldview J.K. Rowling and her publisher wish to promote among the young, shouldn't they applaud those refusing to comply with the ruling?

Since outfits such as the ACLU and the like go into more spasms than a werewolf having its belly rubbed whenever the specter of government threatens to interfere with what goes on in the privacy of one's bedroom or when authorities exert control over what one is permitted to read, you'd think this would be a case right up their alley. Furthermore, especially among those that bought the book with cash, how can such a ruling possibly be enforced? Those having the book ahead of schedule should go ahead and read the book anyway before the approved date knowing that in doing so they take a stand for intellectual liberty.

Unless the practitioners of the dark arts have another nefarious purpose in mind such as mass manipulation or fear they might turn into a pumpkin if someone gazes upon their runes before the appointed hour, J.K. Rowling and these gnarled crones in the publishing industry have no right to complain as they will be getting the same amount of money whether these fourteen copies are sold at 12:01 am or a mere week earlier.

Welfare Witchdoctors: Health Program Used As Front For New Age Quackery

Americans engaged in the struggle for the soul of this country realize the dangers posed by both the New Age movement and certain kinds of government entitlement programs, usually thought as independent phenomena. It now seems these two threats may be getting together to further erode the moral and spiritual foundations of this great nation.

Featured in the October 24th *Washington Post* health insert was a story detailing a government health program where the Department of Housing and Urban development paid \$840,000 to the National Institute for Medical Options to promote techniques to reduce stress and illness among residents of public housing.

There was more to this program than teaching residents to take their vitamins, eat three square meals per day, and to get at least eight hours of sleep each night. As part of the program, participants were taught to burn incense, about the healing power of crystals, and how to chant "I am the perfect image of the Divine Creator". Somehow, I don't think this was a Biblical reference to being made in the image of God because, in addition to the aforementioned practices, patients also learned what goddesses of the Greco-Roman pantheon best described their particular personality.

It is amazing with what one can get by with

provided one's goal is the erosion of the traditional American values.

For example, Greek mythology is no longer deemed appropriate as part of a well-rounded education because of its despised Eurocentric origins even though, despite its shortcomings, it has been traditionally utilized as a literary device in transmitting the ethical heritage of Western civilization. However, when used to undermine traditional Judeo-Christian beliefs, the government gives it its imprimatur as a system by which to promote pagan practices.

One can imagine the outrage that would erupt had personalities been classified according to what Biblical character they most resembled and prayer suggested as technique for controlling stress.

If Christian organizations and charities are to be excluded from alliances with the government designed to ameliorate human deprivation for fear of the harm the church might inflict upon the state rather than as a way to prevent the state from exerting undue control over the church, such cautions should be taken in avoiding entangling relationships with other religions that compromise the First Amendment as well.

It cannot be denied that this so-called "wellness" program offered by the National Institute of Medical Options is fundamentally religious in nature backed by science so dubious in nature it would force Carl Sagan to side with Creation Science if he was forced to pick between the two.

The *Washington Post* article pointed out that the National Institute for Medical Options is administered by the same individual who pastors the Community Center

for Wholistic Healing. Michelle Lusson, ordained by the Episcopal Church, who claims to be a "metaphysician who channels Cosmic Cycle Updates that provide valuable information on the spiritual awakening and transformation of the global world body and of the individual." I don't know exactly what such nonsense means, but I can tell you it wreaks of the New Age movement.

Unfortunately, the questionable spirituality is not confined to the private-sector partner of this contractual relationship. The article revealed that these kinds of beliefs can be traced to the highest levels of public service.

These New Age therapies have been endorsed by HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public and Assisted Housing Delivery Gloria J. Cousar. It was also mentioned she happens to be ordained by the International Metaphysical Ministry.

Cousar defended these kinds of programs by saying, "People become involved in drugs because they have given up.... This program helps empower people to act on healthier lifestyles."

So would handing out Bibles and inviting the downtrodden to Sunday School. However, the government would never do that and certain elites would probably like to forbid you as private citizens from doing that as well in light of the many agency regulations, municipal statutes and corporate policies radically curtailing religious speech and proselytization efforts.

A number of Evangelical leaders have suggested that Christians should curtail the attention they pay to matters of politics and policy in order to concentrate on

the loftier concerns of faith and belief confronting American society. Such a suggestion might prove inadequate when these arenas begin to merge as a single challenge as is the case of these New Age welfare programs.

Canonizing the Blair Witch: Pagan Religion More Noble than Christian Belief in the Eyes of Some

Isaiah 5:20 reads, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Many assume this warns that those who violate this holy decree will have the judgment of God heaped upon them. But while God is not slack in fulfilling His promises, the forthcoming retribution might not necessarily flow directly from His fingers in the manner we might expect. Often we end up being punished by the consequences of our own actions without God intervening as a primary cause.

In an article appearing in the January 18, 2001 edition of the *Prince George's Sentinel* extolling the merits of Wiccan variety witchcraft, one discovers that in calling evil good and good evil that the very epistemological categories required for rational thought and communication begin to break down. Foremost among these is the idea of truth and its basis in objective factual knowledge.

The article begins its symphony of misinformation

from almost the very first note. *Sentinel* staff writer Matt Carr boldly declares early in the piece, "Christianity has dwelled in the hands of war and genocide. Missionaries sent forth to deliver the teachings of God ... led to the torture of the Chinese and Japanese."

From this, one would conclude that fanaticism is only a Christian shortcoming. But excuse me, has anyone checked out much of Islam's record lately? In Sudan, Christian children are sold into slavery and their legs mutilated so they can't run away. Upon reaching adulthood, many will be executed so they won't present a threat to their masters.

And speaking of Japan, did you know that the Christian church there was nearly wiped out by persecution after the death of Francis Xavier, the pioneering Jesuit missionary to the Orient? And the Red Chinese harassment of the modern Church is so well documented that I don't even need to provide additional information to justify my claim.

So much for the wonders of multiculturalism.

Elsewhere, the *Sentinel* article plays so loose with the facts that it is doubtful if the statements made are worthy of classification as such. The article says of a local Wiccan, "[he] celebrates a religion of nature, much in the same way those burned at Salem did."

In all likelihood, with the exception of the local slave, probably not one resident of Salem, Massachusetts was a practitioner of the occultic sciences. Rather the modern equivalent of those persecuted at Salem can be found among those falsely accused of sexual harassment simply because they've rubbed someone the wrong way, figuratively of course, and their accusers had more in

common with Anita Hill than today's average Christian.

Furthermore, technically there were no Wiccans in Massachusetts at the time because, quite frankly, Wicca hadn't been invented yet. According to an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* reviewed on Crosswalk.com, Professor of Religion Phillip Davis of the University of Prince Edward Island and Historian Ronald Hutton of the University of Bristol concur in their assessments that Wicca was concocted in 1950 by amateur anthropologist Gerald B. Gardner who was influenced by German romantics and various occultic practices.

Even though Wicca does not possess a clearly delineable historical pedigree, that does not mean its ideas aren't drawn from some kind of background. It's just not the one filled with unicorns and flower children its adherents would like many to believe. It may have more in common with the Wicked Witch of the West depicted in the Wizard of Oz.

For example, in Wiccan lore, practitioners of this form of spirituality trace their lineage back to the Druids. Did you know that the Druids practiced human sacrifice?

Closely related to the Wiccans are those today professing themselves to be pagans. Their rights to bad mouth Christianity's historical shortcomings are also suspect given their own atrocities.

Leviticus 18:21 says, "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech [a pagan deity] (New International Version)." Later on in the book of II Kings chapter 23, King Josiah destroys the altars upon which children were sacrificed to pagan gods. One might like to note that Wiccan feminists play a prominent role in the abortion movement.

No wonder Wiccans are quick to heave objective history out the window.

From the *Prince George's Sentinel* article, one gets the impression that witches are the only mistreated religious group. The warlock interviewed for the article said, "I'm intimidated to put my beliefs on applications."

Join the club. Many Christians feel the same way about the retaliation they will receive for expressing their convictions to leftwing supervisors and coworkers. Frankly, very few employment applications ask for one's religious beliefs being that to do so violates the law.

Yet the ironic thing is that these very same ones peeved at those apprehensive about suffering a witch among them, to use the King James English, find John Ashcroft an unfit nominee for the office of Attorney General simply because of the Christian beliefs he happens to live by.

As a nation built upon the freedom of religion, the Constitution guarantees the right of citizens to live free in their beliefs without government harassment and without actual forms of physical violence from those with whom they disagree. However, a society that extols witchcraft as virtuous and shuns Christianity as a shameful thing is further down the yellow-brick road of losing its freedom as a judgment permitted under God than most realize.

Of Elves, Angels & Dueling Theologies

One of literature's primary functions is to generate interest in potentially controversial ideas by presenting them in an aesthetically interesting and imaginative

manner.

Most Evangelicals would agree that few twentieth century writers were as successful in getting the reading public to consider the relevance of religious ideas to the complexities of modern life as C.S. Lewis. Though it may come as a surprise, many of his most vociferous critics happen to be fellow Christians.

Writing in response to a recent *Christianity Today* article examining Lewis' use of the literary approach in presenting Christian truth to the modern mind, David Cloud of the Fundamental Baptist Information Service elucidates why Christians adhering to more strident varieties of Fundamentalism ought to avoid this acclaimed author's brand of apologetics.

To Cloud's benefit, he does point out areas in which Lewis' thought may have veered from Biblical standards. Cloud sites as evidence a number of sources detailing where Lewis questioned traditional orthodox understandings of certain doctrines such as the bodily resurrection of believers, the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and the existence of Hell as a physical place rather than simply a state of mind.

Christians ought to be cautioned where the writings of Lewis stray from the narrow path. However, that does not mean there is not insight to be gained from Lewis or that his collected works should be consigned to the garbage to prevent weak minds from falling prey to their questionable aspects.

Particularly annoying to Cloud's brand of Fundamentalism is Lewis' use and defense of myth as a tool whereby skeptical minds might be introduced to the truth.

Of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Christianity

Today's endorsement of the series, David Cloud writes, "I don't know what to say to this except that it is complete nonsense. In his *Chronicles*, Lewis depicts Jesus Christ as a lion named Aslan who is slain on a stone table.

Christianity Today says, 'In Aslan, Christ is made tangible, knowable, real.' As if we can know Jesus Christ best through a fable that is vaguely based on Biblical themes."

Such a conclusion fails to understand the reasons why and with what techniques C.S. Lewis wrote. For even though the Bible is the most detailed and forthright account attesting to the truth of Christ, many hardened hearts are not always open to such an outright presentation of the facts. Some minds may need to take a more circuitous route.

Lewis did not initially embark to compose an outright Christian allegory, and neither did his associate J.R.R. Tolkien in the *Lord of the Rings* saga for that matter. Rather these scholars endeavored to craft tales utilizing the classic motifs with which they had considerable expertise as professors of historical literature. Lewis was himself inspired to write *The Chronicles of Narnia* from the image of a faun, a half human/half goat creature from classical mythology. Tolkien wanted to establish a fantasy world for the language of elves.

Lewis stated in a BBC interview when asked if his Space Trilogy had been written for evangelistic purposes, "...everyone thinks that. They are quite wrong. I've never started from a message or a moral, have you. The story itself should force its moral upon you. You find out what

the moral is by writing the story."

It is only natural then that authors with an abiding respect for the truth will end up addressing eternal realities and principles. Romans 2: 14-15 says, "Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts...(NIV)."

This means that all truth --- despite man's intentions to distort it for his own diabolical purposes --- is ultimately God's truth. Not all ancient myths revel in Bacchanalian debauchery. For example, some explore the dangers of humans possessing a godlike pride called "hubris". The skilled apologist can use these chunks of truth adrift upon the seas of falsehood as a lifeline to those drowning in a deluge of deception.

This is not unlike what the Apostle Paul did in Acts 17 when he addressed the philosophers gathered on the Areopagus.

Paul did not begin outright by berating them for their pagan belief. In verses 22 and 23 he extols, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious. For while I was passing and examining your objects of worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'To an Unknown God'. What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. (NASB)."

From this point, Paul goes on to explain how the message of Jesus Christ fulfilled and surpassed the best in Greek thought. Therefore, those who have a problem with C.S. Lewis' use of literature may also have a problem with the technique employed by the Apostle Paul.

While these rigorous Fundamentalists are to be commended for their eagerness to expound the plain Gospel message, many of them --- especially a number of the preachers --- fail in realizing that a fully-orbed expression of Christian thought requires more than preaching. It requires the translation of these eternal verities into other artistic and literary forms that prepare the heart and mind for a more direct assault upon fallen sensibilities.

By composing a narrative utilizing universal archetypes, Lewis hoped that his saga of these British children encountering a mystical lion in an enchanted land would spark readers into realizing they could have their own encounter with another cosmic cat, namely the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ.

Certain Fundamentalists have done their share of criticism. When are these preachers going to start producing stories of their own or encourage members of their congregations to contribute their talents in forms other than that which goes into the collection plate? At least C.S. Lewis attempted to make an effort in this regard.

David Cloud writes, "...a Christian is what he hears and reads ... it should come as no surprise ... they are seeking to continue the legacy of C.S. Lewis ... it should come as no surprise ... if we find them working towards a common mission with the enemies of the gospel. The young Christian should be very careful what he reads."

In the days before most Christians yielded their paradoctrinal thinking to the control of their pastors or stopped thinking about these cultural issues outside the immediate confines of the church all together, individuals

would employ a kind of intellectual selectivity known as discernment. This meant they were capable of sifting through the good and bad ideas in a given work on their own without a critical clergyman standing over their shoulder chastising them for daring to make a literary selection without ecclesiastical consultation.

Lewis may have propagated questionable ideas in the course of his life's work. But so do a number of Fundamentalists for that matter as some believe one is not really saved unless introduced to Jesus through the King James version of the Bible, that being innocently infatuated with a member of the opposite sex is the moral equivalent of promiscuity or prostitution, and that women ought never get their hair cut or wear trousers.

Unfortunately, faulty ideas are often a symptom of living in a fallen world. But so long as we put our faith in what Lewis referred to as "mere Christianity", one day those of us who do so will have the blessed opportunity of having our thoughts put straight in the presence of none other than the Creator Himself.

Prominent Critic off the Mark Regarding Apocalyptic Thriller

As a semi-professional contrarian prognosticator on current events and ideas, I'll be the first to admit how easy it is to find fault with things falling outside the purview of one's own take on the world. However, it would seem from John Whitehead's review of "Left Behind" in the February 7, 2001 edition of WorldNetDaily that some people are never happy.

Though I have not yet seen the film nor read the series of novels as of earlier 2001, I have seen similar works such as "The Omega Code", "One Moment After" and the 70's classics "Thief in the Night", "Image of the Beast", and "Prodigal Planet", as well as having noticed the proto-eschatological themes addressed in more mainstream science fiction such as "Babylon 5" and "Earth: Final Conflict". I believe I am safe in addressing John Whitehead's criticism of this cinematic production.

John Whitehead levels considerable criticism at "Left Behind". Yet at one time he was one of the voices calling for greater Christian involvement with popular culture as evidenced in a profile of him published in the December 7, 1998 edition of *Christianity Today*. It is in response to this yearning that the producers of "Left Behind" hope their efforts will "lead to more family-friendly movies".

But of such efforts, John Whitehead says today, "Christian involvement in culture should be in a way that ultimately serves that end --- not merely to pour \$17 million into a poorly adapted feature that does not contribute to leading viewers into a deeper relationship with their eternal Creator."

One must assume Mr. Whitehead thinks such edification can be found in "The Last Temptation of Christ" which he classified as "a sympathetic and reverent treatment of Christianity's origins," according to the *Christianity Today* profile. It should be recalled that "The Last Temptation" was the movie that made Judas out to be the hero and cast Jesus as the villain.

Mr. Whitehead further admonishes contemporary Evangelicals in light of the "Left Behind" phenomena,

"Instead of dedicating their lives to taking care of the poor and the needy, American followers of Christ too often ignore His example and instead look for cheap thrills in an increasingly superficial world."

Mr. Whitehead should be reminded of his own neglect of the downtrodden in his own pursuit of glitz and the limelight. According to *Christianity Today*, Mr. Whitehead's civil rights organization the Rutherford Institute, at the expense of those facing more pressing and substantial First Amendment religious rights issues, came to the defense of Paula Jones --- the floozy who wouldn't disrobe for then Governor Clinton but who apparently had no problem doing so for Playboy photographers.

To some Christians, it's not legitimate missions activity unless it's directed at some impoverished foreigner halfway around the globe. John Whitehead writes, "...instead of centering their hopes, prayers and financial resources behind the tragedy in India [a reference to the recent earthquake] ... much of the American Christian community was busy hyping a movie that one reviewer called 'unintentionally hilarious'."

Elsewhere on his gaudy and semi-tasteless looking magazine and website Gadfly, John Whitehead has explored the metaphysical background of the "X-Files".

How would he propose we reach out to those whom this particular genre speaks to? Somehow I don't think vaccination clinics or soup kitchens will quite grab them where they are hurting most. An evangelistic film geared towards their interests in paranormal phenomena and government conspiracies likely would, however. And for others, such visualization would help make the obscure beasts, dragons, plagues and judgments of the

Book of Revelation and other passages of Scripture relevant to their early twenty-first century lives.

John Whitehead dismisses "Left Behind" as a "B" film and comments, "Truly Christian films embody this aim by exploring the human dimensions of loving thy neighbor as thyself, portraying servants in a world where everyone seeks to be a master, and by encountering the Divine in unexpected places ..."

What more could Mr. Whitehead hope for than a movie set during the time of the Tribulation?

During that period in eschatological history, the very power of Satan will be allowed the seemingly unbridled power the Prince of Darkness has always longed for since the time of his fall, and during this future era simply being a Christian could get you executed. It is under such conditions to which Americans are currently not accustomed that the protagonists of "Left Behind" must stand for truth and righteousness during the heyday of the New World Order.

In all likelihood, "Left Behind" is not a perfect movie. However, much of the drivel and filth produced by Hollywood is not worth watching to begin with.

It must be remembered that Christians have not had much practice at producing cinematic masterpieces that are both theologically accurate and appeal to a broad audience. This is due in large part to the sanctimonious piousness like that displayed by those such as John Whitehead, who in at least this instance, refuse to realize the apologetic of certain literary genres and narrative techniques.

Like Unto the Beast: National ID System Poses Threat to Liberty

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens says of the days of the French Revolution, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." The same could be said of the policies and proposals being considered in response to the kamikaze attack upon the United States by fanatical Islamic terrorists.

While the Bush administration is to be commended for taking steps to address the oozing international threats allowed to fester over the course of the past several presidencies, the President would be wise to gauge with a degree of skepticism the crackpot schemes crawling out of the woodwork in the rush to formulate a response to this profound tragedy befalling the nation.

Often the shackles of tyranny do not initially appear as binding chains, but rather as a comforting blanket designed to take the chill out of the concerns of the moment. It is only after more careful reflection that they are revealed for what they really are.

One proposal being bantered about to placate fears regarding terrorism is the possibility of implementing a national ID card. Such a system could result in concealed repercussions those calling for this system are reluctant to discuss.

Before Americans could find the time to organize their thoughts and feelings regarding the nature and meaning of this profound calamity, a ream of so-called policy analysts and technology experts burst onto the

national scene endeavoring to convince the American people as to our need for a national ID system.

Michael Cherkasky, president of Kroll, Inc. Security Consultants, told the *New York Times* that each American could be issued a computerized smart card allowing authorities to immediately ascertain the identity of individuals at specified security checkpoints. It's argued these cards could cut down on crime and possibly prevent another terrorist attack.

What those clamoring for the implementation of this technology often fail to point out is that the drawbacks of the program likely outweigh any potential benefits.

These cards would provide more than name, address, and mugshot of their respective holders. The *New York Times* notes these computerized cards would collect information as to one's location, financial activity, and just about any other kind of electronic information you could possibly imagine --- including the speed at which you are traveling down the highway, according to the September 19th report.

Some of this stuff is none of the government's business, even if there is a need to conduct a rigorous campaign against the threat of terrorism. Such a card would end up penalizing perfectly legitimate activities by bringing them to the attention of authorities.

For example, what's going to happen to armchair scholars and researchers interested in the study of violent revolutionary phenomena from an academic social science perspective when these otherwise harmless bookworms check out a library book on terrorism or weapons of mass destruction? I should not be sent to jail for investigating a

Tom Clancy novel detailing acts similar to those perpetrated by the September 11th terrorists.

Some may dismiss this as an overreaction, but it is not a farfetched scenario. During the late 1980's, the FBI operated an intelligence program targeting the library records of readers daring to express a bibliographic interest in Eastern Europe. And as recently as the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, prosecutors sought to subpoena a list of the reading materials purchased by that particular bawdy intern.

Just think how much more widespread and incriminating such a program would be in an environment of heightened security with the information readily available in a single database. Frankly, if the stuff has been deemed appropriate enough to sit on a library shelf, it's nobody's business who checks it out, whether it's the Pope and Billy Graham or Bin Ladin and Hussein themselves.

The problem is not so much that this information alone would be used to nab terrorists, saboteurs or other murderous malcontents, but rather that it would be used in pursuit of other liberty-inhibiting agendas aimed at social engineering.

For example, if all commercial transactions and economic exchanges are to be cataloged in a gargantuan database, what's to stop the government from penalizing those of us who eat too many Big Macs or who buy more sugary snacks than we should at the local supermarket? What's to stop the government from rationing gas or denying a car loan to individuals who bureaucrats deem to go on too many extraneous daytrips? Even worse, what's to prevent this information from being used by employers

and insurance companies against overweight or sickly employees or beneficiaries?

Of course, in the eyes of some, such concerns don't really matter. Representative Mary Bono (whose primary qualification for office was having been married to Sonny) told CNSNews.com on September 20, 2001, "When we consider ourselves to be at war, people are going to have to recognize that some of our freedoms are going to be gone."

You can rest assured though that, as with most of the statutory impositions it inflicts upon the American people, Congress will no doubt weasel its way into exempting itself from many of the proposed counter-terrorism measures, since (in its own eyes at least) our representatives are too important to be confined by such rigors. Bet the likes of Ted Kennedy or Barney Frank will never endure the humiliation of being tossed in a jail cell and body cavity searched (something Frank might enjoy, on second thought) or have their life savings confiscated thanks to a glitch occurring in this technology, which some will no doubt imbue with near-religious infallibility and reverence.

This proposed system of ID has very little to do with preventing terrorism and everything to do with imposing yet another layer of bureaucratic control upon the lives of the American people. Such a conclusion is borne out by the positions taken by House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt regarding specific proposals designed to stem the tide of terrorist violence.

Enthusiastically endorsing the need for a national ID system, this Congressional leader is reported by Matt Drudge as saying, "We are in a new world. This event will

change the balance between freedom and security." Yet this Missouri Democrat has no intention of tipping the scales in favor of security when it comes to saving lives, as Gephardt vociferously opposes plans to arm pilots to defend against hijackers.

The attitude of the British government regarding the ID issue is particularly revealing. While at one time standing as one of the few defenders of liberty in the world, Great Britain now speaks with a duplicity that would make the Soviet Union cringe.

While purporting to be a totally voluntary program, the *British Sunday Mirror* reports that without an ID, its subjects there cannot board an airplane, buy gasoline (as if that will do anything to stop terrorism), open a bank account, or get a job. Such draconian stipulations remind us of that chilling passage in Revelation 13:17 foreboding: "...no man might buy or sell, save he have the mark."

Matt Drudge also quotes British Home Secretary David Blunkett as saying on the BBC that we cannot be hamstrung by an excessively "legalistic" interpretation of human rights. In other words, we are going to end up losing our most fundamental constitutional axioms when "Congress shall make no law" no longer means Congress shall make no law.

All that said, the blame does not lie solely with those holding public office or employed in the allied policy professions such as media or public interest research. At present, President Bush wisely concluded that a national ID would have negligible impact in curbing terrorism. However, such discernment stands in marked contrast to the nearly 70% of those polled by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press clamoring

for this technology, ready to trade away their birthright of liberty like Esau for a pottage of illusory security.

What do the panic stricken think will be solved by electronic security cards? How is it going to prevent another round of mass murders? Most of the attackers and those aiding in this atrocity were foreigners of dubious moral backgrounds to begin with and should have never been let in in the first place.

It's also argued that a national ID would produce the spin-off benefit of curbing all forms of illegal immigration, not just those with a propensity towards suicidal martyrdom. With the concessions made to multiculturalism over the past several years and the obsequious praise lavished upon certain immigrant groups for undermining traditional American culture, does anyone honestly believe that the U.S. government will use these ID's as a catalyst to deport illicit émigrés?

As is being done at certain banks that waive documentation requirements to allow illegals to open special accounts and in states granting them drivers' licenses, the Federal Government will probably grant the ID's willy-nilly, without any proof of legality whatsoever, to members of certain ethnic groups with whom politicians of either party are rushing to curry favor. Just don't get caught on an airplane if you happen to belong to a group without the same degree of clout in the voting booth.

To put it bluntly, the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks were partly the fault of a number of government agencies and certain components of the travel industry in the sense of their failing to exercise proper vigilance against threats they very well knew existed.

Immigration authorities should have barred this human slime from desecrating the sovereign soil of the United States. A number of other reports emphasized that traditional antagonisms between the FBI and the CIA might have prevented the flow of intelligence needed to foil such a plot and prevent such a cataclysmic loss of life. Other than tightening security at transportation centers, certain government buildings, and clamping down on the riffraff crossing the borders, there is no reason to punish the American people for a shortcoming not their own.

Benjamin Franklin once noted that those who would trade freedom for security deserve neither freedom nor security. The terrorists have succeeded in taking away our sense of security. Now there are those within the government and among the people who would take away our freedom as well.

Markedly Naive: Tragedy Used to Market One of the Future's Most Infamous Technologies

On “The Simpsons”, the wife of Springfield’s resident clergyman Reverend Lovejoy is known to rally support for initiatives of questionable logic by injecting herself into a scene and intoning in a shrill voice, “Think of the children.” While this recurring gag has provided a sense of comedy throughout the run of this classic series, it’s humor, unfortunately, is derived from the often ludicrous nature of contemporary political discourse.

Americans have watched in abject horror the spate of grizzly child abductions and murders. Yet before the

nation could finish mourning, voices rushed forward suggesting we dramatically alter our way of life to prevent these kinds of tragedies.

Instead of emphasizing what parents can do to protect their children like not befriending vagrants as in the cases of Elizabeth Smart and Cassandra Williamson or the dangers of married women propositioning equally kinky men in bars, some would rather use these incidents to promote the pet causes of the New World Order.

Considerable Evangelical eschatological speculation centers around the so-called “Mark of the Beast”. Of it, Revelation 13:16-17 tells us, “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Bible scholars and religious futurists conjecture that this passage foretells of a global political system so all-encompassing that its rulers catalog every single human being and track every economic transaction. In exercising such a degree of control, this regime hopes to take the place of God in the process.

It is normally assumed that the totalitarian computer surveillance system needed to carry out this task will suddenly be imposed during the Tribulation, of which Matthew 24:21-22 says, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should be no flesh saved: but for the elect’s sake, those days shall be shortened.”

While the system will take on its most spiritually

damning form during that particular historical period, there is nothing in Scripture indicating that the groundwork for this system couldn't be set into motion beforehand. Events of this magnitude seldom occur overnight. As with the attack on the World Trade Center, these machinations are set into motion years before, regardless of whether the masses are too distracted by media debauchery to realize it or not.

It has been emphasized that at this time participation in these computer monitoring programs is completely voluntary. However, just because the technology is not compulsory today does not mean it won't be tomorrow or that it won't be enforced through sanctions slightly less binding than law but somewhat more coercive than uninhibited economic exchange.

Seems the minions of the New World Order now intend to wrap themselves in the assuring garments of child safety. At first, these chips will be a novelty providing those who install them in their children an additional peace of mind.

But as they grow in popularity, those who refuse to participate on the grounds of religious conviction or civil liberties concerns will be seen with the same contempt and derision now reserved for those who don't own microwave ovens or telephone answering machines.

Eventually, parents refusing to electronically brand their progeny will in all likelihood be sanctioned as negligent or unfit. Those in the public questioning the wisdom of this strategy will be labeled as supporters of child abduction, molestation, and just about every other brand of abhorrent violence on the books.

While Evangelical Christians might find common

cause with Libertarians in standing up to this issue, their usual establishmentarian Conservative allies will likely be of little help. Frankly, Sean Hannity has come out as one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the technology I have ever seen, gushing on his Fox News Channel program of his eagerness to invest in the company developing these nightmarish location and identification devices. And anyone thinking Ollie North will stand up for the Constitution are in for a rude awakening in light of a *Sydney Morning Herald* story implicating him as a key architect in the elaborate web of presidential executive orders that could one day set aside America's constitutional guarantees in favor of an arbitrary military dictatorship.

Benjamin Franklin once said those who favor security over liberty deserve neither liberty nor security. While all of us grieve over the ghastly child abductions grabbing the headlines, we must also be as careful of solutions as evil in nature as these horrifying crimes these peddlers of indenturehood are claiming to prevent.

National ID Act Threatens Liberty

On the April 26, 2006 edition of "Politics & Religion", prophecy scholar Irving Baxter and Joseph Farah of WorldNetDaily.com discussed the implications of the National ID Act.

Interesting how, as barriers are being taken down to normalize illegals and allow any foreigner in that wants, by 2008 actual Americans will be expected to "authenticate" themselves for the privilege of receiving an

identification approved by the Department of Homeland Security.

According to CNET.com, your local MVA (that bastion of courtesy and service) will be the party to determine whether the proof of your existence you place upon the altar of the state will be deemed an acceptable libation unto the Beast.

This raises the concern of what of Americans who, for whatever reason, are unable to produce proper documentation. What is to stop government officials from using this as a means of removing disruptive elements from our population such as troublesome activists such as civil libertarians and principled Christians, those holding property deemed desirable that the government would like to eminent domain for its corporatist masters, or even senior citizens who are no longer useful to the COMMUNITY and whose unprogressive outlooks hinder social progress?

What is to stop the government from snatching your house since you are not "properly documented" and handing it over to what was just a few years previous an illegal alien that isn't even an American?

It is argued these super-ID's are needed to prevent "terrorism" and will be checked before allowing passengers to board an airplane. Baxter and Farah mention these cards (at least cards for now anyway as ID chips loom ever closer on the horizon) might even be checked before allowing people to get on a bus.

What's to prevent regulators from enacting some kind of law or decree stipulating one must present this national ID before being allowed to purchase gasoline, food, or some other necessity? After all, after the

September 11th attacks, the FBI thought it was a national security matter to investigate what supermarket discount card programs the Jihadists belonged to.

Americans had better wake up now or the National ID act might very well turn into the National Displacement and Relocation Act.

Hints Revealed Why Border Left Wide Open

Ben Franklin is attributed with saying that those desiring safety above liberty deserve neither safety nor liberty. If one particular proposal being suggested as a potential solution to the seemingly insurmountable immigration problem is implemented, those living in the United States (both those with the right to be here as well as those that should be tossed back over the border) will have neither safety nor liberty.

Both the chairman of Verichip Corporation and the President of Columbia are on record as suggesting that the vaunted guest workers heralded as the future backbone of the U.S. economy could be implanted with radio frequency identification chips in order to ease security concerns by tracking the movements of migrants and reliably confirming their identities.

Citizens might respond, “So? This doesn’t concern us. This only applies to those that want to come here in compliance with the law and the first thing any law-abiding person does is always comply with the law no matter what.” You know, a variation of the old why-are-you-so-concerned-about-privacy-if-you-haven’t-got-anything-to-hide-thing.

The program might start off implanting only

foreigners, but little will prevent this program from being expanded to include citizens once full Americans have been conditioned to accept biochips. For the proposal to inject aliens with homing devices is nothing more than a technologically sophisticated manner through which to transform citizenship into a legal and economic irrelevancy and as a way to bring about the demise of Americans as a distinct and robust people in the world

In the future when the world will no longer be characterized by independent sovereign states but instead organized around regional or hemispheric districts, the privileges (as rights will no longer exist) one will be permitted to enjoy at the whim of global planners will not be based upon the natural rights bestowed upon the individual by God Himself but whether one has bended his knee before the masters of the end of the age and submitted to their global order by accepting the identification chip.

Those whose perceptions are confined by the realities of the immediate present and unable to conceptualize anything in the future beyond getting drunk next weekend can't imagine Americans submitting willingly to a program of such extensive control. Yet we are already well down that path. All in the name of preventing terrorism, Americans just about now do a striptease in airports, have been compelled to drink their own breast milk, think little of the government rifling through their library records, and will probably not make much of a fuss about the NSA collecting dossiers right off their MySpace profiles.

All the government has to do to get the population to accept monitoring chips is to continue to do little to

deter or interdict every piece of human refuse thinking it's their place to mosey on into the United States (without respect for our laws, language or culture) and demand we acquiesce to their inferior way of life. If the acolytes of the chip promise that the device will dramatically cut down on undesirables while ensuring that this technology will allow the sincere (both native born and newcomer alike) to be able to contribute to the American economy, the naive will flock in droves to prove their fealty to the hemispheric union and ultimately the global order.

Despite the preeminent threat biochips pose to human liberty as well as their spiritual implications as described in Revelation 13, such a proposal is actually quite revealing as to what the quasi-open border crowd actually thinks of Hispanics and others coming to our shores (or perhaps more precisely right on through our shores without even stopping).

Elites claim that, if anything, they want to see an increase in the levels of immigration and to legalize most of those already here out of their compassion for the downtrodden of the earth and out of appreciation for diverse cultures. What they really want is to reduce everyone below their lofty status to the level of a glorified slave class.

At the rally on the Mall in Washington, DC lauding the wonders of illegal immigration, a litany of radical liberals aided and abetted this criminal act by complaining how, if illicit cross border migration was curtailed, these elites would lose their steady stream of cheap labor. And in all the fancy rhetoric about the wonders of legalizing those in violation of the nation's immigration laws, the politicians, activists, and bigwigs conveniently neglected

to mention how these new additions will be incorporated into the system of statutes and regulations already bearing down on the American economy.

For example, unscrupulous businessmen often employ illegals because of their below the radar status so these firms can reimburse these laborers at rates lower than that proscribed by law. But when these workers are granted an occupational legality equivalent to that enjoyed by all other citizens and properly documented aliens, won't those now bestowed the right to remain here through the alchemy of legislative and bureaucratic hocus pocus have to be given the same pay and workplace protections as everybody else? More likely, these guidelines will be altered or overlooked in their entirety to drag us all down to the squalor and poverty characteristic of the Latin American barrio.

Been giving the boss some lip about not getting a raise; you better watch out. Not only can you be replaced with a foreigner that will work for a pittance of what you make but who will not only be beaten gladly with a rubber hose but also endure being denied potty breaks as well.

Refuse to accept that identification chip? No problem. We'll see just how long you're able to last excluded from all economic participation, or as Revelation 13 puts it, "...no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark."

Whereas the globalists claim to have the best interests of the migrants at heart only to use these laborers in pursuit of their agenda to turn the entire planet into one giant slave plantation, at least those opposed to the system of immigration (both legal and illegal) as it currently stands think enough of their counterparts originating

outside this nation to force them to abide by the system of laws to which all people are to be subject.

For one is dishonest with those one is dismissively contemptuous, not with those one respects as fellow human beings. Furthermore, if all men really are created equal, shouldn't they be expected to adhere to properly constituted law irrespective of their pity parties or sob stories? To grant them a waiver from these statutory expectations is an admittance that deep down one believes those of the population in question to be an inferior breed of the human species incapable of rising to the standard everyone else is expected to adhere to.

In the circles that study the methods through which freedoms are lost and nations undermined, there is a concept credited with being Hegelian in origin known as "order from chaos". According to the strategy, those in power allow conditions to deteriorate to the point where the people clamor to have an iron fist clamp down around them.

No doubt about it, the current immigration crisis did not come about unintentionally. Rather it is part of a deliberate plan to bring about the end of the United States and to eradicate human liberty from the face of the earth.

Conan The Inconsistent

Though it might not be obvious upon first glance, both politics and cinema are actually different sides of the same coin. Both of these forms of performance employ an engaging narrative structure for the purposes of conveying how those crafting these dramas see ultimate truths manifesting themselves in the lives of individuals.

In “The Terminator“, as a cyborg sent back in time, Arnold Schwarzenegger walks into a gun shop and orders up a litany of firearms. The highlight of the scene occurs when he requests a plasma rifle with a 40-watt range, a weapon that has not yet been invented.

Though running as a Republican in the California gubernatorial recall, Schwarzenegger endorses a number of policies traditionally popular among more liberal constituencies, gun control being a primary example. So should Schwarzenegger’s character ever want to acquire such a weapon legally, Governor Schwarzenegger would probably want to prohibit him from doing so.

One might overlook Schwarzenegger’s actions in the first Terminator film since he played the antagonist and thus allowed greater dramatic leeway as a thespian since the villain by definition operates as an antithesis to the film’s moral vision. However, in the second and third installments of the series, Arnold portrays a cyborg sent back in time to protect the life of John Connor who is one day destined to lead the human resistance against a tyrannical artificial intelligence and its murderous robotic minions.

As the hero, one would assume Schwarzenegger upholds the ethical milieu established in the film since that is the duty of the so-called “good guy”. In order to protect the life of his young charge, Arnold must confront various robo-assassins bent on erasing Mr. Connor from the timeline all together.

However, Arnold’s character does not accomplish his objective through spineless appeals to the good will and higher nature of his fellow cyborgs or by “leaving things to the authorities” (a sure recipe for disaster if there

ever was one in a moment of crisis). Instead he is compelled to respond in the only manner criminal scumbags understand (be they the advanced computerized variety of the future, the diaper-headed Middle Eastern kind, or just your typical home-invading street trash) that of course being superior firepower. Yet if the real Arnold had his way, John Connor would be unable to defend himself, thereby dooming the future of mankind.

There is more at stake here than a dimwitted actor cast in a role as a character with whom he has profound disagreements. By enunciating such a anti-Second Amendment position, Mr. Schwarzenegger reveals he is either a stooge of or knowingly in league with those desiring to wipe out most of humanity from the face of the earth and to enslave those unlucky enough to remain alive.

Even though most statists don't like to admit it, the primary purpose of the Second Amendment is to provide citizens of goodwill a mechanism of legal recourse whereby they possess judicial grounds to protect themselves against the rapacious banditry of both those who perpetrate their misdeeds against liberty and justice from behind an illusion of authority bestowed by government as well as the more obvious thugs prowling the streets. The first thing any aspiring tyrant does is to disarm the populace, thereby making them less prone to resist and more malleable to whatever radical social manipulation those holding power have in mind.

The skeptical might laugh about viewing a sci-fi action/adventure as a philosophical cinematic manifesto. Yet the world portrayed in "The Terminator" films is closer to becoming a reality than most realize thanks in large part to those like Schwarzenegger in both parties

seeking to undermine fundamental rights in order to remake the world in their own image, often employing revolutions in technology to oppress mankind instead of utilizing scientific advances to maximize freedom for all individuals.

In fact, a dictatorship combining the worst elements of both man and machine is not beyond possibility. Of the False Prophet, Revelation 13:15 says, “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed (KJV).”

Prophecy scholars have speculated for decades what exactly this passage is foretelling. The Brothers Lalonde have hypothesized an advanced virtual reality simulation or interactive hologram. It could just as well be some kind of sophisticated android.

Exodus 20:4-5 commands, “You shall not make for yourself an idol...You shall not bow down to worship them. (NIV)” History and Archeology note these objects often came in the form of attractive statuary representing the respective deities of pagan cultures around the world.

By engineering an audioanimatronaton so technologically sophisticated as to mimic life, those seeking to exercise global domination could easily win the hearts and minds of a post-Christian population no longer embracing Biblical conceptions of what exactly constitutes life and how it comes about in the first place. After all, who among us would not be more amazed by the Abe Lincoln in Disney’s Hall of Presidents than an otherwise unanimated counterpart in a run-of-the-mill wax museum?

Such speculations are not the irrational fantasies of a half-mad fanatic. Adrian Berry --- a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, the Royal Geographical Society, and the British Interplanetary Society (organizations not exactly known as bastions of creation science or eschatological exaggeration) --- writes in *The Next 500 Years: Life In The Coming Millennium*, “It will not be difficult, in the future, for malicious people to build killer robots like that in the film *The Terminator*.” There’s no guarantee such artificial beings are going to abide by Asimov’s famed, but hopelessly naive, Laws Of Robotics.

Such threats do not confine themselves to the nebulous, undefinable future of sci-fi writers and comic book artists that always seems to be just beyond reach protected by the impenetrable veil of tomorrow. Misguided souls are busy preparing such nightmares as we speak.

Through assorted drugs and nanotechnologies, Pentagon wonks plan to bioengineer a soldier requiring less sleep and possessing enhanced abilities, no doubt ending his days in hellish misery in some forsaken Veterans’ hospital when such experiments don’t end up as eggheads intended. Elsewhere, scientists have implanted neuro-transceivers in the brains of rats allowing for control of the rodent’s movements from outside its nervous system.

One can just imagine internationalist planners salivating like Pavlov’s dogs over implications of such devices. Do the words, “You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile” sound familiar?

At present, it’s easy to dismiss the threat to liberty posed by hypocritical elites wielding power who would

deny the American people the same prerogatives enjoyed and abused by the overclass coupled with advances in technology unbridled by the ethical guidance once provided by a Judeo-Christian culture. Yet who until recently could have imagined an election with porn stars, has-been child actors, a Zsa Zsa Gabor impersonator, and an Aztec supremacist legitimately campaigning for public office?

Come Out With Your Thoughts Up!

During the 1990's, the term "thought police" was used as a colorful euphemism describing academic administrators and allied activist mobs who roamed the halls of higher education imposing the dictates of political correctness upon college campuses across the nation. However, in this new Post-9/11 era we are constantly being told about, that phrase too takes on a whole new meaning.

Use to be in authoritarian police states the oppressed could find a degree of comfort by retreating within themselves to the solace of their own thoughts. That is a luxury that even Americans will no longer enjoy if certain individuals in government and industry have their way.

Science fiction often speculates about the ability to read the human mind. The Vulcans on *Star Trek* have their mind meld. On *Babylon 5*, there is a government agency, known as the Psi-Corps, staffed by telepaths who use their extrasensory abilities for various intelligence, law enforcement, and conspiratorial activities. These disturbing methods of extracting information could be well

on their way to becoming reality.

NASA, in conjunction with the airline industry, is developing a device capable of reading the thoughts of passengers by measuring brain waves and correlating this data with that of certain emotional states and frames of mind. Don't dismiss this story as the ravings of militia men obsessed with black helicopters or an ufologist with his head stuck in a cropcircle. This information comes straight from the pages of the August 17, 2002 *Washington Times*, a reasonably reliable journalistic outlet.

The ranks of the empty-headed who cheerfully support any curtailment of liberty so long as it is wrapped in the pseudo-patriotic pretensions of preventing terrorism might not mind having the most intimate corners of their intellectual recesses probed by the likes of airport security. But if these simpletons believe this technology will remain locked behind the security counter, these scanners might not have much to detect when it comes to these dullards.

For if devices can be devised to decipher the psychological emanations associated with terrorism, there is nothing preventing this technology from being used to detect other states of consciousness as well. For example, radical feminists obsessed with sexual harassment could be alerted whenever a flirtatious manager stole a glimpse of that comely secretary in the cubicle next door (these feminists, on the other hand, would likely be so hideous in appearance and shrill in personality they'd never cause anyone to set off the alarm).

More disturbingly, this technology could be used by the government to impose a monolithic set of beliefs. After all, one can't very well keep one's contrary opinions

to himself when the powers that be insist upon rummaging through them like last year's tax return.

Revelation 13:12 says of the False Prophet, the Anti-Christ's chief economic and religious stooge, "...and he causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast (KJV)..." This is further elaborated in verse 15 which reads, "...and cause all who refused to worship the image [of the first beast] to be killed."

Lord only knows (quite literally) that not everyone who shows up at church is in a worship frame of mind. Likewise, just because someone, say, knelt before this said audioanimatronic or virtual reality image, without a way to objectively quantify what's transpiring in someone else's mind, it would be impossible to determine if they were merely doing it to preserve their own lives, out of a sincere adoration of evil, or simply lost in their thoughts wondering whether they left the coffee pot boiling back at the house. Sound far fetched? Scientists have already mapped those parts of the brain active during what's perceived as religious experience.

One doesn't have to be a prophecy enthusiast to be concerned about the oppressive potentiality of this technology. Mihir Kshirisagar of the Electronic Privacy Information Center told the *Washington Times*, "A lot of people's fears of flying would send those meters off the charts. Are they going to pull all those people aside?"

With the prospects of having to drink their own breastmilk or to strip-down to who knows what to tantalize airport security, it's only natural there's going to be an undercurrent of hostility seething within the bosoms of those forced for whatever reason to endure air travel. And declaring airports to be places where thoughts

regarding terrorism and feelings of anxiety are not allowed ensures that is what passengers will think about entering these transportation hubs. Just try not thinking about pink elephants when admonished not to. Leave it to the government to misunderstand the dynamics of human nature.

If this technology catches on, it is possible to conceive of a future not unlike that depicted by the summer blockbuster "Minority Report" with scanners on every corner ascertaining the mood of pedestrians as they walk by to see if they live up to some arbitrary standard of happiness. Before long, those in authority would be able to weed out the naturally disgruntled, claiming they could not afford the time to distinguish those who channel their dissatisfaction into acceptable forms of disagreement from those prone to nihilistic violence.

William Lind of The Free Congress Foundation jokingly remarked we ought to be relieved that the suspected Shoe Bomber possessed only combustible footwear instead of an exploding suppository or we'd be forced to remove more than our shoes as we were wanded by security. Now seems authorities want to go poking around parts of the individual that ought to remain as private.

Immediately following the September 2001 attacks, President Bush stood before the American people calling for the noble undertaking of ridding the world of terrorism for the purposes of preserving freedom. But if even the very thoughts in our heads are no longer ours to keep to ourselves alone, are we truly free? Seems this battle may have been lost before it ever really began.

A Review Of *The Children Of Men* by P.D. James

Often the appeal of science fiction lies in the genre's ability to extrapolate from the trends of the present and project them into the future. One novel exemplifying this tendency is *The Children Of Men* by P.D. James.

In *The Children Of Men*, the reader finds a world where the population has become inexplicably infertile and must deal with the stresses of a dwindling population and the psychological angst that results when many realize what's the point of life if it will come to a screeching halt in a scant generation. Such a milieu is explored through the eyes of Oxford Historian Theodore Faron who becomes a reluctant intermediary between a group of bumbling, idealistic revolutionaries and the dictatorial Warden of England who happens to be Theodore's cousin.

The group starts out with the goal of enacting needed reforms such as better treatment of migrant workers known as Sojourners and restoring order to an out-of-control penal colony on the Isle of Man where the inmates --- some not as criminal as the general population is led to believe --- are left to fend for themselves. However, as the story unfolds, a matter of greater urgency comes to the forefront of the plot, namely that a couple within the cell has been able to conceive a child.

The Children Of Men is not the most riveting example of the dystopian police state novel. It often gets bogged in the details of the personal experiences, emotions, and perceptions of its protagonist Theodore

Faron.

Yet at times the book provides glimpses into a morally eerie world where the outrages of our own day are allowed to fester to ghastly proportions.

For example, the elderly are encouraged to commit ritualized suicide in a ceremony called the “Quietus”, which Theo discovers is not quite so voluntary for those trying to back out at the last minute. Since people no longer have children, they instead lavish their nurturing affections on pets, even having their kittens christened at formalized baptisms. Those born into the last generation are given free reign and little moral instruction --- as such they are self-absorbed to the point of arrogance and even murder.

Of particular interest is the frequent mention of religion made throughout the novel. Two of the revolutionaries are motivated by Christian beliefs. However, others hide behind the cloak of aberrant faith as a scam to enrich themselves personally.

“Roaring Roger” is a fire-and-brimstone televangelist preaching that the global infertility is God’s judgment while playing on guilt and fear to finance his own lavish lifestyle. Rosie McClure is more broadminded in her religious views, but so much so her brain roles right out as she preaches a gospel of nonjudgmental hedonism. The Church of England is characterized as “no longer with a common doctrine or common liturgy, [and] so fragmented that there was no knowing what some sects might have come to believe.” One just wishes Ms. James had spent as much time in such socio-clerical exposition as she did in embroidering the extraneously tedious background details of Professor Faron’s psyche.

The political situation described in *The Children Of Men* serves as a cautionary tale where our own institutions are headed if we are not careful.

In most speculative narratives dealing with one form of totalitarianism or the other, the regimes under consideration often lord over the masses with brutality.

In *The Children Of Men*, however, the Warden's regime is rather genteel as far as dictatorships go if you happen to be a good little citizen and not to stir up offense. But then again, most of the citizens don't cause much trouble anyway since most have lost interest in political participation and the Warden is careful to maintain illusions of democracy.

Of this society very much like our own, one is reminded of Francis Schaeffer's warnings in *A Christian Manifesto* about comfort and affluence becoming the organizing principles in a political system where higher truths such as freedom and self-reliance are increasingly seen as impediments to rather than a necessity of just government and good order.

Replacing Dollars With Coins Makes No “Cents”

With all the commotion on Capitol Hill about the GOP “Contract With America”, advocates of the New World Order surreptitiously introduced a plan to eliminate the cherished Greenback. According to reports, the dollar bill might be replaced with a dollar coin.

Advocates of the plan point out the proposal will benefit coin-dependent industries and cut down on

printing costs. But more than likely, this change will be implemented in order to elicit a specific response from the American people.

Popular mythology insists that the American people loathe loose change. Paper currency is convenient to carry and its replacement by metal coins will literally burden the pockets of people across the country.

Loaded down with these replacement coins, Americans will clamor for yet another substitute. Politicians will respond there is indeed a solution, but don't expect the return of George, Abe, Ben, Alex, or Ulysses to billfolds everywhere.

Experts will laud that the answer to expensive paper currency and heavy coin is none other than the electronic smart card. It will be claimed such cards facilitate buying, selling, and trading. The cards will also provide a sense of convenience while thwarting counterfeiters all at the same time. But nary a word will be mentioned about the card's potential downside.

While government officials will attempt to persuade to the contrary, these cards have the ability to catalog an individual's every transaction. Everyone from insurance companies to the IRS will know everything about individuals from organizations associated with to favored brands of toilet paper.

Many have likened the computerization of society to an electronic information superhighway. Like such thoroughfares in the physical world, those in cyberspace are bound to face life-threatening accidents and government operatives will be prone to pull you over to the shoulder for no other reason than the voyeuristic thrill of delving into a citizen's most private secrets.

The next time you pick up a dollar bill, you had better study old George's face. He and the freedoms he fought for his whole life will not be around much longer as the barcode and the biochip are well on their way to becoming the new national symbols.

State Oversteps

For decades, Bible prophecy experts and conservative futurists have warned that Social Security numbers would one day serve as the backbone of some kind of bio-identification system likely consisting of a chip embedded under the skin or lasered on as some kind of barcode tattoo. While there is no doubt much truth in their studied predictions, no longer is this numeric identifier enough to participate in common everyday affairs. Increasingly, one must possess yet another form of identification to accomplish the most rudimentary of tasks.

It might come as a surprise but the tiny little form of identification heralded by teenagers the world over as a certification of emancipation is in fact fast becoming a parchment of enslavement, at least for those not possessing it. The driver's license is quickly becoming the means whereby individuals are being frozen out of life's affairs.

An acquaintance of mine who did not possess a driver's license went to open a bank account. Despite having another photo ID and a Social Security number, my acquaintance was told a driver's license or DMV identification card alternative was required for verification. I don't remember similar demands being

placed upon the swarms of foreigners violating our borders and pouring into our institutions for handouts.

Within their proper context, driver's licenses are most appropriate as they serve as a mechanism whereby the unfit yet law-abiding can be kept off the nation's roads. However, they have transcended the bounds of their usefulness when used to bar individuals from activities not even remotely related to vehicular operation.

They Don't Cast Space Tyrants Like They Use To

As a narrative form driven considerably by adversarial conflict, in science fiction a good story must have a villain just as interesting (sometimes even more so) than the primary hero or protagonist. As one of the archetypes from which much popular "space opera" is derived, Flash Gordon did much to perfect this template in the form of villains such as Ming the Merciless.

Part of the appeal of such characters in these contexts is that neither hero nor villain usually allowed pressures short of overwhelming force to influence the types of things either believed should be stood up for, even if it happened to be their own lust for power or megalomania. However, had the original Flash Gordon been saddled with the same politically correct sensitivities as those weighing down the creativity of writers and producers of today, it is doubtful the character would have achieved name recognition as an icon of popular culture nearly on par with Superman and if he had been a real interplanetary swashbuckler our planet would have been

laid to waste by Mongo long ago.

Though the series did not premiere until 8/10/07, considerably prior to that airdate publicists and producers had already fanned out across the Internet wringing their hands in an almost Phil Donahue-I-feel-so-guilty-to-be-an-American manner as to why it was necessary to alter the appearance of Ming the Merciless. For you see, in most interpretations, Ming is depicted with a Fu Manchu mustache and the flowing robes of an oriental despot.

Since the 1980's or thereabouts, Ming has become decreasingly Asian in his appearance to the point in a 1996 version of Flash Gordon he was no longer humanoid at all but rather reptilian. The reason often given is the need to avoid racial stereotyping (I wonder what the herpetological and animals rights lobbies have to say about lizards being depicted in such a light then).

Interestingly, this concern is only invoked when it benefits minorities. For example, in publicity shots on the SciFi.com website, rather than flowing robes or even a cape, the Emperor of Mongo is rather depicted in a more militaristic looking ensemble.

Furthermore, not only are all but the visually impaired able to ascertain that the actor portraying the role is blond but in the accompanying text, which is longer for Ming than any of the other characters as it goes on and on apologizing how Ming looked previously throughout comic book and cinematic history, the text closes by pointing out that the actor playing the part is blond.

Often, we have it so beaten into our heads that we aren't even to think about race or physical characteristics that I was condemned up one side and down the other for criticizing a version of the Honeymooners featuring Black

actors, which most other Americans didn't think highly of either as the film was probably out no more than two weeks. And if we are to swallow the line that Ming's evil does not depend on his appearance, then why is hair color being pointed out to us at all?

Furthermore, if we are to be told that a traditional portrayal of Ming the Merciless is inappropriate for fear of stereotyping Asians, couldn't a pale blond in a moderately looking fascist uniform lead to prejudice against Germans? But then again, since Germans are part of the White race, their sensibilities don't count for much anyway.

To what extent should the anti-stereotyping mania be taken anyway? If we cannot enjoy a traditional Ming the Merciless for fear of propagating negative stereotypes about Asians, conversely, aren't we hindering the imaginative expansion of the minds of minority children by casting the male lead as the typical statuesque blond most have come to expect to play Flash Gordon?

Why not a Black man, or better yet, how about a short, dumpy Jew? Wouldn't watch Flash Gordon otherwise you say? Then why should we be entertained by a Ming that doesn't even look like a Ming?

This fear of portraying a beloved character in a certain way could get ridiculous if fans do not speak up about it. For example, 50 or 100 years from now should Star Wars ever be remade, will disability advocates get all up in arms (if they happen to have any) that Vader's characteristic wheezing is an offense against those on respirators? Likewise, retirees will claim that Palpatine's gnarled and hunched appearance casts those of an advanced age in a bad light. Fans of the Borg from Star

Trek will demand their moment of equity by claiming that the portrayal of what has become one of science fiction's most nightmarish species does not depict absolutist collectivism and the elimination of individuality (concepts all the rage these days from leftwing secularist utopians all the way to certain Evangelical churches) in a balanced light.

And what about Hans Zarkhov? Though he is one of the protagonists of the series, in this interpretation it seems producers are playing up what could be categorized as the bumbling, nerdish aspects of his personality. If one is going to make all these self-congratulatory overtures towards the Asian community, then isn't it just as wrong to disrespect the shows core base of fans who often fall into the "geek" demographic?

In the classic 1979 Filmation animated version of Flash Gordon, Zarkhov was not written as such. There, though hardly the man of action compared to Flash Gordon, he was depicted as a highly competent though slightly plumpish scientist around middle age.

Though concern about Ming is carefully packaged in terms of racism, a charge these days that even the most advanced deflector shields could protect not against, one must step back and wonder if that is really the underlying concern or if the offense goes to a much deeper level. For the write up on Ming in fact contains a glaring example of racism if one just happens to know where to look.

In elaborating the history of the character, mention is made of the 1980's animated series "Defenders Of The Earth" where a number of King Feature's Syndicate heroes joined forces to battle Ming as their primary foe. Mentioned as members of this team of adventurers are

Flash Gordon, The Phantom, and Mandrake the Magician.

Those that remember the series will point out that a character named Lothar is conspicuously absent from the roster. For those with no idea who I am talking about, Lothar started his comics career as Mandrake's Black manservant but by the time of his appearance on "Defenders of the Earth" had, shall we say, risen in stature to that as an equal to these other crime fighters as the team's strongman and primary gadget guy (hence his stanza in the memorable theme song, though hardly as memorable as Mandrake's, "His strength is a legend. His skills conquer all. On with his power, we never will fall. Lothar." If everything is to be second guessed as an example of overt or institutional racism, then why not the continued perception of this character as a mere sidekick no more important than Batman's Robin, Captain America's Bucky or Superman's dog Krypto?

Villains such as Ming were initially given their particular appearances as a reflection of the so-called "Yellow Peril" at that time in light of the fear of the threat posed by Asian powers, particularly Japan. Seems the more things change, the more they stay the same as nearly 70 years later we are frankly still facing similar dangers from that part of the world as one of the primary threats arrayed against us. Anyone thinking differently needs only to be reminded of the swarms of illegal aliens (many from Asia) flooding the country, Islamic terrorists, the Red Chinese Army, and North Korean weapons of mass destruction.

However, unlike the 1930's and 40's, today our creative minds do not want to awaken us to the threat of annihilation by foreign empires constantly growing

stronger while our nations grows considerably weaker. Rather, we are to be kept ignorant until its too late through either forced silence or by brainwashing the youth of America into thinking these despotic regimes are just as good and often even better than our own United States.

Casual observers will quip, “What are you complaining about? Ming still appears to be a rather loathsome individual.” True enough for the moment.

But what about in the next version of Flash Gordon produced 30 or 40 years hence from now if there is still a United States or even widespread advanced civilization or technology at that point in light of the threat posed by nuclear and electromagnetic pulse weapons. With the downward slide of ethics and morality, there will probably come a point where it will be considered an outrage on par with what spewed forth from the lips of Don Imus to categorize tyrants and despots as villains at all.

Rather, such characters are merely acting in accord with the social parameters acceptable within their particular culture. After all, who is Flash Gordon to impose Earth standards on the planet Mongo anyway?

Over the course of 10 seasons and in the movie prior to that, the producers of Stargate have been able to depict a variety of interstellar warlords such as Ra, Apophos, and Eu in the customary raiment of an Eastern despot and there have been no bias related crimes as a result. If the producers of Flash Gordon want to keep on insisting otherwise, fans of Battlestar Galactica just might say such statements are full of felgarcarb.

Beware False Prophets

In Mark 13:22, it reads, “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

While many today give little heed to such exhortations as they see the contemporary era devoid of potential spiritual entrapments, a gathering took place in Washington, DC that proves this advice is as relevant today as it was nearly 2000 years ago.

The event dubbed “True Love Day” and “Blessing 1997” was billed as promoting the sanctity of marriage and the importance of family values.

However, this meeting was not coordinated by a ministry as innocuous as Promise Keepers, a group that despite good intentions occasionally exhibited spiritually questionable roots. This convention was headed by none other than famed cult leader Sun Myung Moon.

While it is not like this event resulted in new members joining the sect through its highly controversial recruiting techniques, it is the interfaith nature of such an event which should generate concern in believing Christian and concerned citizen alike.

This was not the first time world leaders (both secular and religious) were eager to lick Moon’s feet. Both George Bush and Gerald Ford have addressed Moon-sponsored events. Mikhail Gorbachev (who now trots the globe as an environmental crusader despite having once ruled over one of the filthiest countries on the planet) has gotten aboard the Moon bandwagon despite the alleged anti-Communist stance of the Unification

Church. Even televangelist Jerry Falwell has made friendly overtures towards this false messiah and benefited financially from that organization's vast financial resources.

There is nothing wrong with different faiths working together for clearly defined political and moral objectives that do not involve doctrinal compromise. However, Moon's religious intentions are undeniable as the nonprofit association that sponsored the event, the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, seeks to transcend all religions and establish a direct link with the divine, with access no doubt controlled by none other than Rev. Moon.

The Bible speaks of a coming political and religious leader who will seek to unify the world behind him in the name of peace and prosperity only to usher in a global tyranny unprecedented in human history. And while Moon may himself hope to be that individual, he most likely is not as his reputation proceeds him.

However, with his efforts to win the favor of politicians, the young (to be used as a brainwashed labor force and as breeding stock to produce additional followers), the elderly (from whom to swindle their life's savings), and now Evangelical Christians and targeted minorities such as Blacks, Moon could very well be setting the stage for this prophesied figure. For Moon has made it his very mission to undermine the social and psychological barriers that exist in reality to protect individual and spiritual liberty.

Battlestar Galatica Conclusion Straddles Between Imagination & Belief

In one of the climactic scenes of the conclusion of "Battlestar Galactica", Gaius Baltar remarks that an unseen hand had been guiding events all along up until that point. Just as the characters were propelled by something from beyond themselves, the producers behind this show may have been driven by ideas originating from sources other than their own fertile imaginations.

Even in the original "Battlestar Galactica" from the 1970's, one of the underlying premises of the saga was that "Life here began out there with forefathers of the Egyptians, the Toltecs, and the Mayans. There are some who say there may yet be brothers of man who fight somewhere to survive among the heavens." In the series finale of the contemporary retelling of the sci-fi classic, viewers got to see a bit of how this vision might have played out.

Though most can watch these compelling dramas unaware of the underlying worldviews of the authors and not be impacted by them to any appreciable degree, there is indeed a philosophy being presented that if nothing else impacts the authors' approach to the material at hand.

In the original with the narration provided by Patrick Macnee who went on to play a devil-like figure in that versions mildly Mormonesque mythos, one assumes that, when mankind arrived here on earth, there was no other intelligent life.

However, in the recently concluded version, we

realize that it is prehistoric Earth (not even the actual Earth in the reimagining and if you add a third you'll have to have a crossover show with the Thundercats) that the Galactica fleet has arrived at.

To the casual viewer, either version does not seem all that different. It may come as a surprise, therefore, that each depiction presents a slightly different viewpoint as to how civilization originated here on Earth.

In the original "Battlestar Galactica" with Earth being the home of the lost 13th tribe of man, it could be said that human life here is the result of an anthropocentric panspermia, meaning we came from elsewhere and are not native to this planet. This has a number of implications, especially for those embracing the perspective of Deep Ecology.

Going beyond a traditional environmentalist standpoint, Deep Ecology holds that mankind is an invasive species infesting the planet. As such, ripping it out through any means necessary including mass death is perfectly acceptable. Prince Phillip, whose primary accomplishment has been marrying someone else who never had to work a day in her life, basically wishes he could be reincarnated as a killer virus to wipe your family out because his own was a total drain on world resources.

The view taken by the new Galactica is much more complex and seems to appeal (or at least hominid) so many other science fiction narratives these days that if one was a conspiracy theorist one might easily conclude that some kind of interplanetary catechism was trying to be conveyed to the masses. Once the Galactica fleet arrives, one sees a crouching survey team consisting of the show's primary characters such as Admiral Adama and Dr. Baltar.

These two proceed to banter back and forth about the odds of human life originating at two distinct places in the universe with Baltar remarking how the humans of the twelve colonies were genetically compatible with those there on this planet that would come to be known as Earth. It was also noted how these humanoids had not yet developed language and how the new arrivals could bestow this rudiment of civilization upon their less-developed counterparts.

Thus, in this version of "Battlestar Galactica", the scenario presented is closer to that of the "Chariots Of The Gods" hypothesis. According to that theory, culture and technology were not developed over time by earth's native inhabitants but rather something bestowed upon us by an advanced civilization "from beyond the heavens".

Even more interesting, in the final scene of the series, the bottom of the screen flashes "150,000 years in the future". We then see the "angelic" versions of Six and Baltar reading a *National Geographic* article over the shoulder of producer Brian Moore about "Mitochondrial Eve", the earliest known ancestor from whom all human beings can trace our ancestry. Discussing the article between themselves, Baltar and Six reveal that the human race walking this earth today is actually a hybrid one the result of interbreeding between humans and genetically engineered Cylon synthoids.

A number in the viewing audience will conclude what an imaginative way to resolve the destructive Human/Cylon conflict with both sides getting what they want as prophesied with each of these civilizations being saved or continued through the hybrid child Hera. However, those more attuned to these messages will

notice that this theme of human-"extraterrestrial" amalgamation has shown up in so many examples of speculative fiction the past few years that one would almost say it was cliché if it did not serve some higher propaganda purpose.

Intellectually Excavating Indiana Jones Unearths Epistemological Artifacts

As a discipline, archaeology examines the artistic and technological remains of various cultures in the attempt to learn more about them. Often from these objects, students learn about more than the subject's material nature but also insight into the beliefs and paradigms important to the human species at a particular time.

Probably the most prominent representative of the discipline in public culture is none other than Indiana Jones, with Stargate's Dr. Daniel Jackson coming in at second. As a narrative itself created at a particular point in time, the Indiana Jones movies themselves can be placed under investigation to unearth what our own culture has believed at various points in recent history as well as the ideas shaping those having such influence over our own society.

Through comparing "The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" and the other films of the Indiana Jones saga, especially with "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade", one can detect the shifts taking place all around us as to what the broader popular culture perceives as foundational truth. For example,

though the films should not be seen as a systematic theology upon which to base one's faith, "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Last Crusade" had at their base Judeo-Christian assumptions in that artifacts connected with this tradition, namely the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail (the cup used by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper) were actual historic objects and, since these objects in legend exude a power that cannot be explained by conventional science, one assumes they are connected to the divine.

In the latest film of the series, "Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull", ultimate wisdom and power is not seen as originating in a traditional conception of God as in "Raiders Of The Lost Ark" or "Last Crusade" or even in spirits as in "Indiana Jones & The Temple Of Doom". Rather in the latest installment, the source of enlightenment happens to be those entities with the bulbous heads and lanky limbs we have come to know as extraterrestrials whose crystalline skulls in this story can serve as powerful tools through which to augur the future, communicate with these beings, and to gain control of the world. Though an entertaining story, it may have considerable basis in reality --- or at least in the worldviews of its high level producers.

For example, the opening scene with Indy trouncing through the military hanger is set in none other than Area 51 and the top secret project he alludes to working on 10 years prior to the events of the story is none other than the Roswell crash. Some might flippantly dismiss these as urban legends that have taken on lives of their own beyond the significance of any incidents that may have occurred in these locations that now fire the imagination.

However, it is pretty hard to ignore the Nazca lines which were not discovered by modern man until the discovery of flight and the existence of a tribe of Indians that mutilated the shape of their skulls to make themselves appear as if they were from beyond this earth.

Even these can be dismissed as historical or anthropological curiosities as human beings have believed or done some rather bizarre things since nearly the dawn of time. The thing is that there are those among the influential who would imbue intelligences from beyond this earth with a metaphysical prominence going above that which you would bestow upon someone from another country as being different from but frankly no better ontologically than you ultimately.

While a highly creative individual, to Steven Spielberg, these creatures are much more than imaginative characters or plot elements. Rather, the acclaimed director has had an interest and belief in the paranormal throughout much of his life beyond that of a mere narrative device and he has been reported to have had a number of encounters with the unexplained.

In the movie, the quest was not so much to verify whether or not transterrestrial life simply existed as a biological fact but rather that enlightenment was somehow obtained from these beings and as such they were worthy of the adoration and devotion once reserved for God Himself. As the public comes to embrace this worldview more and more, we are beginning to see a shift from viewing beings like this in a solely naturalistic context of beings from another planet not all that unlike our own to, as in the case of “The Kingdom of The Crystal Skull” as coming from a realm transcendent to our own from what

could be referred to as another dimension.

Thus, in essence, in terms of our paradigms, the Western mind has come full circle to an extent but on a less sure footing than when it set out on the quest to comprehend the cosmos in which we find ourselves. It use to be believed that nonhuman intelligences originated from another realm (initially Heaven but tossed out when they followed Lucifer/Satan into rebellion). Then as the West increasingly fell under the spell of what Francis Schaeffer termed “modern modern science” (meaning science opposed to the existence of the spiritual realm), such entities were believed to come from other planets.

However, as the New Age movement has become so entrenched that it is no longer new anymore and prefers even fancier titles such as "cosmic spirituality", now it seems our alleged betters along the path of evolutionary consciousness take on the best and worst depending upon one's perspective. For example, in the latest Indiana Jones adventure, no longer are the gods of the dawning order disembodied spirits we cannot see but rather posses physical form we can relate to even if it differs vastly from our own. And yet even though they are like us, they also come from a place apart from and above our own so as to avoid banality by providing us with the hope of a somewhere possessing a transcendence we can still aspire to.

Those watching “Indiana Jones & The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull” can feel free to do so with a clear conscience as it is primarily an entertaining adventure story. However, as with the protagonist of this series, viewers should take with them the assorted equipment necessary to avoid the pitfalls and traps they are likely to

encounter as they undertake an expedition into this realm where imagination intersects belief.

Just Because You Don't Understand Doesn't Mean Its Not Real: Most Epistemologically Unprepared For Bioenhancement Nightmares

An old adage posits that what you don't know can't hurt you. Whoever came up with that one obviously had little imagination to foresee the horrors about to be set loose upon the earth in the years and decades to come.

In my column "Scientists Suggest Bestiality", I wrote about findings by MIT and Harvard researchers suggesting that millions of years ago ancient humans and chimpanzees engaged in interspecies liaisons resulting in fecund offspring, bolstering the claims by a growing number of geneticists and the like that the boundaries between the species might not be as set in stone (or at least DNA) as at one time thought. It is deplorable enough some would interpret the data in this fashion (as frankly there aren't that many interspecies pornos dating back that far to serve as irrefutable evidence) to further undermine the uniqueness of man in their attempt to bolster the Darwinian hypothesis that one form of life is essentially no better than any other. However, things grow even more disturbing when one realizes that there are adherents of this particular worldview that believe that it is not enough that all species are the same morally but that they must all be merged into the same species ontologically.

Also in the column, I pointed out the attempts

whispered about in hushed tones through the pages of speculative history about attempts overseen by the devotees of perdition seeking to intermingle man and ape hoping to conjure an abomination synthesizing attributes of each such as Stalin's plot to breed a hybrid ape-man soldier, various Chinese experiments, and rumors about what went on behind the closed doors of the Yerkes National Primate Research Center. For daring to comment on the moral implications of the issue and speculating where it might be headed in the future, those of limited imagination accused me of being "mentally sick" and possibly being a member of the John Birch Society. Though I am not as I seldom join membership groups for reasons similar to Batman's one-time leeriness of the Justice League, philosophically, the JBS is not all that bad of a group to belong to.

Call me a kook all you want as sanity is often overrated. However, one cannot attribute my speculations to "having watched Tank Girl one too many times" as I was accused of by one sophisticate so sure of what he thinks reality will be like a few decades hence if the good Lord has not intervened to put a stop to it by then.

If my prognostications are too much for you to handle as some have said at times I am "just too real", perhaps more down to earth sources such as Albert Mohler (head of Southern Baptist Seminary) and the *Boston Globe* are more your style. With considerably more to lose in terms of finances and prestige as a result of their writings if they are labeled a lunatic than I do, one will find their conclusions backed by current scientific speculation and academic theorizing.

Both Albert Mohler, in "Listening To The

Transhumanists”, and Cathy Young of the *Boston Globe*, in “Transhumanism : Yearning To Transcend Biology”, analyze a conference held at Stanford Law School titled “Human Enhancement Technologies & Human Rights”. In an age where it is nearly impossible to keep track of the countless laws threatening both human life and liberty, the eggheads in whose hands rest our earthly fates have decided such confusion is not enough to keep them occupied as they endeavor to craft entire new bodies of law akin to as if Judge Judy had set up court in the bar scene from *Star Wars*.

Employing typical postmodernist rhetoric, conference luminaries claimed to be offering liberation by attempting to prevent us from being seen as mere “biopower” and, in the words of the conferees as reported by Albert Mohler, from the “political struggles that structure the occupation of one’s embodied space” (whatever that all means) . But in order to deliver on the promise, postmodernism must cut off humanity’s nose to spite its face.

Usually that statement is meant in a metaphorical sense. However, according to Albert Mohler, the tenured loons to whom high salaries are paid to subvert our culture and brainwash the nation’s young are so unbalanced that they might very well take the adage literally. At the conference it was suggested that individuals should have the right to amputate healthy limbs to prevent themselves from being used as “biopower for the state”, no doubt instead being supported by the remainder of us not quite progressive enough to be ungrateful for an otherwise functioning body.

The average person unaccustomed to the

intellectual confusion that today passes as profound scholastic innovation would be shocked by such a proposal. However, some lunatic with a hacksaw thinking he's Vincent Van Gogh is actually quite mild when compared with the future being planned for us by these deluded technocrats.

Those gathered at the Stanford conference waxed eloquent and no doubt grew misty-eyed about the moral obligation to uplift "non-human animals" (and they aren't talking about making sure these critters have a full bowl of water, are brought inside on a cold night, or receive an occasional scratch on the belly or behind the ears). Rather, what these theoretical futurists are suggesting is that we should tinker around with these organisms until they are on par with the rest of us in terms of intelligence and reasoning ability. But then again, in light of those gathered at the Transhumanist conference, it wouldn't be too difficult to engineer such a creature surpassing them in terms of commonsense.

Interestingly, while those at the conference spoke of the moral obligations of human beings, these are often the very same raconteurs that get all livid about the prospect of one individual imposing morality on someone else, especially if the one being imposed upon happens to belong to a darling minority group. Who, then, are we to assume that animals, even if they could be theoretically progressed to our level of intelligence, will abide by human standards? What is to prevent them from retaining their similar kind of bloodlust while simply turning their intelligence against us?

According to Albert Mohler's commentary, there would be little ground for the Transhumanists to complain

about a lion with a PhD going Hannibal Lector on us. To James Hughes, author of *Citizen Cyborg*, such refusal to assume a position lower down the food chain simply because of our status as human beings is akin to racism. And we all know how liberals just love to suppress all other rights in their grand crusade to eliminate even the last hint of “racism”.

These technocrats do a good job talking the jargon of science fiction but obviously haven’t been watching the same movies and television programs as the rest of us. From the various incarnations of the Planet of the Apes alone, we learn of the potential horrors likely to result should humanity lose its monopoly on rational thought and written communication.

Merging man and machine will prove no better if done so with a helter skelter, willy nilly philosophy seeking to violate traditional conceptions of what it means to be a person just for the sake of violating what it means to be a person. It is one thing to swap a faulty organ with a replacement such as an artificial heart as such an effort would be undertaken out of respect for individual human life.

But that is not what many of the Transhumanists are proposing. For the spirit one discerns in pondering the ruminations of the Transhumanists causes one to conclude that what these thinkers propose is development progressing towards something along the lines of the Borg from Star Trek or the Cybermen or Dahleks from Doctor Who.

Transhumanist spokesman (or perhaps I should instead say “spokesbeing” for reasons that will be stated momentarily) claim they want to expand what it means to

be human but in reality want to abolish many of those attributes that make each of us distinct individuals without having to rely on the superscience of the elites. According to Albert Mohler, foremost on this movement's agenda is the obliteration or at least the blurring of the innate gender distinctions that have characterized the human species throughout its history no matter how much cultural roles and expectations might change. For if Transhumanists have their way, one day women might be able to inseminate themselves as well as alter physiology so that your daddy will also be your mommy.

However, not only do many Transhumanists want to obliterate natural physical distinctions but they are even more offended by outdated conceptions of individuality. At one time, the Borg, Dahleks, and Cybermen represented just about the most frightening science fiction villains imaginable because of the threat they posed of subsuming the autonomous existential unit into the larger group entity. If things continue on their current philosophical course, it won't be long until the Borg will come to be seen as the heroes of the Star Trek universe and Captain Picard and the crew of his Enterprise as the bad guys for standing against the unfolding progress of a unified universal consciousness.

In one episode of Deep Space Nine, Commander Sisko and Chief O'Brien end up on a planet where a band of deliberately stranded human beings live a cultic Luddite existence free of technology. And even though this philosophy was imposed by the typical charismatic guru, unlike at Jonestown or the Branch Davidian compound these actions were not justified in the name of God, or even the saucer men as in the case of the

Heaven's Gate group, but rather repeatedly in the name of the COMMUNITY.

One does not have to be a convention-going Trekkie to point out that on the surface that these technophobes and the Borg appear to be about as far apart philosophically as one can get. This sect eschewed technology whereas the Borg literally incorporated it into the very fiber of their being. However, in the later episodes of *Star Trek: Voyager*, the eponymous vessel of the series making its way back to earth from the Delta Quadrant of the Milky Way came across another group that was essentially a Hegelian synthesis of the two previously mentioned antagonists.

In the episode "Unity", the Voyager crew (particularly Commander Chacotay) came across a group of Borg that had been severed from the Collective (the term used by the Borg for their group consciousness). But instead of living their lives as individuals, the group resorts to a smaller version of the collective they called (drum roll please.....) the COMMUNITY.

While these ideas and concepts make for interesting stories, unfortunately the average citizen is coming upon them more and more in their average daily lives. For example, all throughout the year but especially at times designated "holiday" by the radical nonsectarians obsessed with nonoffense to all faiths except Biblical Christianity, it has become common place for those making astronomical amounts of money (because they look good with layers upon layers of make-up sandblasted into the craters of their faces or because they have mastered the art of dribbling a ball back and forth across a wooden court where at the end they toss it through a

meshed hoop) to lecture the rest of us on the need to give back to the COMMUNITY. Usually, the average American of good sense can easily tune out such nonsense by simply turning the channel or realizing such celebrities don't exactly play with a full deck anyway in terms of either intelligence or moral integrity.

However, there are sectors of our culture most of us have been conditioned into accepting without question that are at the forefront of implementing the collectivist agenda. Conservative Evangelical Protestants especially when going to church have been accustomed to hearing sermons focusing on how Christ came into this world born of the Virgin Mary, lived the perfect life that we could not, suffered and died in our place for our sins, and rose from the dead so that we as individuals might be saved.

It was this emphasis upon the distinct individual as a value and a good in himself that in large part empowered the free lands of the West, even if the ideal wasn't adhered to at every moment in history, to withstand the overwhelming onslaught of world Communism. However, just because one goes to what one would think would be an ecclesiastical assembly of solid theology that is no guarantee one will today hear of this message that those of conviction have willingly given their lives for since the waning days of Rome.

In the postmodern or emerging church of today, one is more likely to hear that the Christian faith is not so much about personal salvation but rather about the sublimation of one's identity into that of the larger group to bring about the Kingdom of God here on earth prior to or even irrespective of the physical return of Christ. Couple this with how Romans 13 is invoked to insist upon

submission in regards to matters over which government was never intended to have any control in our private lives and very few Americans would resist efforts to turn them into something other than what is referred to as “baseline human”.

Though it is doubtful initial changes would be as dramatic as the time Captain Picard was turned into Locutis by the Borg, government coercion is no doubt on the way. Cathy Young of the *Boston Globe* writes in a July 10, 2006 article titled “Transhumanism Yearning To Transcend Biology”, “Suppose we get to the point where genetic intervention...can reduce the risk of criminal behavior. Could parents be charged with negligence if they reject such procedures and their child commits a crime? Could a teenager with anti-social tendencies be forced to undergo the treatment? What about the scenario depicted in the film ‘Gattica’, in which prospective parents face tremendous social pressure to genetically engineer their children?”

One might also argue that initially one wouldn’t even have to resort to criminal charges to frighten most parents into compliance. Rather, all you would have to do is craft a series of incentives and penalties similar to those already in place coercing those with less fortitude to surrender their offspring to the public school system.

For example, your child doesn’t have that implant guaranteeing both faster cognition and social compliance? That’s too bad, a life of menial labor for them then. We are already seeing something like this in systems of education where diplomas are being replaced with so-called “certificates of mastery” more concerned about assessing a student’s political attitudes and adaptability to

the commands of the elite or norms of the group than whether or not a body of standardized objective facts or skills have been acquired.

Once the population has been conditioned by this process for awhile (maybe several generations but, at the accelerated pace at which things are changing, perhaps even less), the state (or whatever organizational entity might be running things by that point) will coerce compliance by declaring that those who do not submit themselves for biomechanicalgenetic enhancement are no longer worthy of the protections granted to whomever the overly educated bestow the rank of human being upon. For while most whose ears are not tuned in will come away thinking that the Transhumanist movement is nothing more than a lobby for those wanting to live their lives with self-inflicted deformities, if one parses every single word uttered by those whose brains have been rewired by this dangerous spiritual delusion, one will have noticed that according to this worldview as Alber Mohler quotes from James Hughes, “Under personhood theory, some humans would be excluded, but all self-aware entities --- whether human, machine, chimera, or robot --- would qualify for the rights, privileges, and protections of citizenship.”

Just as multiculturalists today argue that the only thing unworthy of tolerance is intolerance since no one in their right mind would disagree with the multiculturalists, eventually those that disagree with the Transhumanist position on human enhancements and the like will be accused of enunciating a position so far outside the accepted mainstream that those who utter such things will not be deemed worthy of the privileges of personhood.

Some will dismiss these warnings claiming such nightmares could never become a reality. The same kinds of things use to be said about nuclear weapons and terrorists flying jetliners into skyscrapers as well.

Doctor Who Tackles Transgenic Menace

As culture passes through various stages of technological development, the science fiction of a particular point in history often reflects the concerns regarding the horrors discerning intellects at the time feared could possibly be inflicted upon the earth should what is then considered new knowledge get out of hand. For example, throughout the 50's and 60's, speculative literature often focused on the impact of radiation as embodied by the origins of Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk, and the Fantastic Four.

Though these characters still remain at the forefront of popular culture, in some instances their origins have been slightly reinterpreted to reflect the concerns of the new generation of authors putting their own creative spins on them and to capture the imaginations of a contemporary fan base. For example, in the Spider-Man films, the arachnid conveying its abilities to an unsuspecting Peter Parker is no longer just an average one accidentally bombarded with radiation but rather one deliberately tinkered with at the genetic level that somehow escapes lab captivity.

Though tastes in entertainment may differ on both sides of the Atlantic, it is pretty safe to say that Doctor Who is a venerable sci-fi icon among fans irrespective of

their country of origin. Even though I myself am a relatively new fan as classic episodes use to air well past midnight on the local PBS affiliate when I was a youth, much of the appeal of the crumble-coated space-fairing time traveler has been because of the unique manner in which the show's creators project ethical concerns against unique cosmic backdrops and circumstances.

For example, one episode of season three of the revived series dealt with the frustration those of us dwelling in urban areas have to contend with in the form of what seems to be unending traffic congestion. In this story, commuters on what was a second earth set millennia in the future literally spent much of their lives in contraptions that looked like a cross between a flying minivan and a cramped apartment where it could literally take years to travel just a few miles.

Tucked away between that amusing tidbit and a complete singing of "The Old Rugged Cross" that was rendered with such seriousness that one could see tears in the eyes of the characters was another narrative detail that just jumped out at the viewer in tune with where science and philosophy might be headed if concerned people of common sense don't soon put a stop to it. Though the geriatric lesbian couple was shocking enough, their risqué union seemed outdated and quaint in comparison to that between two of the other commuters the Doctor came across.

For in one of the vehicles was a regular looking human woman who was married to an individual half human and half feline in his physiology. As unsettling as that was, viewers were in for an even bigger surprise when the husband beams with pride to the wife and asks

her to let the Doctor see the babies. The doting mother returns with kittens that sound like they are meowing “momma”.

The scene alone served as a startling warning of the future we might have to confront if a growing number in the Transhumanist movement have their way. For those whose news diet consists primarily of what gutter Lindsay Lohan puked in the night before, Transhumanism is the movement hypothesizing that human beings must move beyond the limitations inherent to our physiology if we are to proceed to the next stage in our development as a species. Transgenics would be a subset of this movement believing this goal is best accomplished by incorporating characteristics of other organisms into the human genome by essentially engineering an amalgamation on the molecular level of two distinct species.

Proponents of this ontological melding will respond that the family in this episode of Doctor Who was depicted in such a positive light that Transhumanism could easily be seen as a benefit or as at least ethically neutral. However, despite dancing gingerly around the topic in one episode, producers were more blatant in their concerns in the next.

In the episode "Dahleks In Manhattan", the Doctor and rebound companion Martha Jones travel back to the Big Apple of the Depression Era. Here they encounter a bit of a mystery intertwining missing transients from a Central Park Hooverville and the construction of the Empire State building. From that point forward, the story begins to parallel events and developments here in our own time more than most of us would be willing to admit.

The Cult of Skaro (think the Dahlek version of the

Free Masons or Illuminati in that it has been alluded to that this group exists above and beyond the normal authorities of this species in order to facilitate long term reflection regarding galactic domination) co-opts the construction of the Empire State building to use as a genetics research facility. As part of their experiments, the Dahleks kidnap the nearby homeless and meld the dimwitted among the captives with porcine DNA to create a hybrid slave race similar in appearance to Jabba the Hutt's Gomorrean guards in "Return Of The Jedi" or the things that ran Bospin's carbonite freezing chamber in "The Empire Strikes Back."

Eventually, the Doctor stumbles upon these pigmen. Interestingly, the pigmen are told by their Dalek overseers to take the Doctor and the captives of higher intelligence to the TRANSGENIC laboratory.

While one may come across science fiction stories where some lunatic tries to create some kind of abomination by fusing together disparate species, seldom has one heard the word "transgentic" bantered about that freely. Viewers then learn that the pigmen are not an end in themselves but rather tests to work the kinks out so that the Dahleks might merge with human victims since it has been concluded that such a step is necessary to bring about the next stage in Dahlek evolution. From the process emerges a cycloptic monstrosity that even the other Dahleks turn against as the result was anathema even to their worldview of destruction and conquest summarized by their Naziesque catchphrase of "EXTERMINATE. EXTERMINATE."

All well and good for a Friday night's entertainment, but what does this have to do with real life,

the unsuspecting might ask. Quite a bit, actually.

For starters, along the fringes, one hears accounts of individuals abducted by nonhuman entities (the origins of which is not relevant to this line of argumentation as one band of researchers sympathetic to this reality claims such beings are biological hailing from elsewhere in the universe while another claims these beings are actually non-corporeal or the offspring of the biological and non-corporeal) for the purposes of amalgamating distinct orders of life.

And even if one does not buy into speculation regarding intelligent life beyond our own, one has to bury one's head deep in the sand to avoid talk these days about proposals to join man and animal on a genetic level. Not long ago, one could easily dismiss such conjecturing as the hyperactive imagination of those who have spent too many hours watching the Sci-Fi Channel. Now though, one sees an increasing number of credentialed scientists with the financial backing of industry, academia, and government that can actually ruin innocent human lives openly discussing these kinds of experiments that will potentially result in hybrid entities such as mice with physiologically human brains and human beings with the wings of birds.

Use to be one would imagine the likes of Dr. Frankenstein prowling around in some dank laboratory or at some ultrasecret government facility. However, now such advocates of deliberate biological deviancy proudly herald their position and hold conferences at prestigious universities where they act like you are the sicko if you don't have a smile plastered across your face about the plans for a generation of intentionally disfigured children.

Now one doesn't even have to turn to obtuse scientific journals printed in exceedingly miniscule typeface read only by a handful of eggheads that have not seen a hairbrush in years. One only needs access to a mainstream newspaper.

According to the *Washington Post* in a June 24, 2007 piece titled "Making Manimals" by Slate.com correspondent William Saletan, at the moment most efforts at joining human and animal DNA are reasonably modest such as transplanting baboon hearts and pig valves into human subjects in order to keep them alive. However, it would not take too much effort beyond what is possible now to dramatically expand the scope of these endeavors.

Saletan writes, "To make humanized animals really creepy, you'd have to do several things. You increase the ratio of human to animal DNA. You'd transplant human cells that spread throughout the body. You'd do it early in embryonic development so the human cells would shape the animals architecture, not just blend in. You'd grow the embryo to maturity. And you'd start messing with the brain. We're doing all of these things."

Though the author will admit to the general public what is going on, instead of condemning the things such practices might lead to, he turns around and condemns those condemning this technology by casting suspicions on them as those Evangelicals the *Washington Post* likes to categorize as "poor, uneducated, and easy to command."

Saletan concludes his remarks by saying, "If you want permanent restrictions, your best bet is the senator who tried to impose them two years ago. He's the same

presidential candidate now leading the charge against evolution; Sam Brownback, a Kansas Republican. He thinks we're separate from other animals, 'unique in the created order'. Too bad this wasn't true in the past --- and it won't be true in the future."

If that is how the elites of the scientific establishment are coming to feel, that should give all of us hayseeds that happen to think there is something special about the human race cause for concern. For although Saletan and others like him try to make a laughing stock of those opposed to the hobo stew of species amalgamation by insinuating that, as with evolution, only buffoons oppose the process, they are approaching a truth that defenders of this technology may not want to touch. That truth is of course being that without evolution as an operational paradigm (as it is not an established fact at the macro level) transgenics would not be morally permissible.

For if human beings are not "unique in the created order" as the transgenic evolutionists who now hold sway in the halls of corporate, academic and government research now argue, then why should human beings be granted any special rights at all? And in some circles, we probably have even fewer rights as some of the shrill harpies in the animal rights movement who go into apoplexy over a smashed eagle's egg are often the loudest banshees for the right to hack human babies to pieces.

Initially, these technologies and procedures will be marketed under the banner of medical progress and those opposed will be castigated for their lack of sympathy for the suffering just as those opposed to embryonic stem cell research were cast as being opposed to Superman ever

walking again as in the case of Christopher Reeve. Saletan writes, "We're not doing these things because they are creepy. We're doing them because they are logical. The more you humanize animals, the better they serve their purposes as lab models of humanity. That's what's scary about species mixing. It's not some crazy Frankenstein project. It's the future of medicine."

However, it is not like this is where researchers will stop their work out of some reverence for the well being of human beings made in the image of God as this ideal has already been held up for condemnation and ridicule. As even someone as sympathetic to this research as Saletan writes, "When Stanford first head of the proposal for humanized mice brains, they were grossed out. But after thinking it over, they tentatively endorsed the idea and decided that it may not be bad to endow mice with some aspects of human consciousness or some human cognitive abilities." The British Academy and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences have likewise refused to permanently restrict the humanization of animals.

Thus, once the urge to use this technology for legitimate medical applications has reached its limit, there will be little there to prevent its use just a little more and then just a little more. After it is used to bring a handicapped or diseased person back to normal, what is to prevent it from being used to make a perfectly healthy person better beyond what a rational person steeped in Judeo-Christian morality would conclude were God's initial intentions and specifications?

For example, successfully transferred neurons from an animal to help the paralyzed? All well and good, but if someone does not put a foot down somewhere, what is to

prevent the Pentagon from calling up soldiers given the charge of an electric eel?

Ghouls in lab coats want to create such creatures no doubt so they can carry out Dr. Mengele-like experiments. Saletan writes, “Imagine that: a hominid brain network you can treat like a lab animal because it is a lab animal.” The same thing used to no doubt be said about Jews and Black folks in decades past with atrocious consequences.

It is claimed in a *New York Times* article by Nicholas Wade titled “Chimeras On The Horizon” that, given the 20-day gestation period of a mouse compared to the nearly nine months a human being is baking in the oven, it is doubtful human cognitive abilities would have time to develop. But how can anyone be absolutely certain? To this day, despite the number of books on the subject containing five inch words no average person could possibly pronounce, scientists and philosophers are still not sure of the exact link between the brain and mind, this conundrum so perplexing that it is called the mind/body problem.

In the Wade article, Richard Doerflinger of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides probably the soundest advice: “If something were half human and half animal, what would our moral responsibilities be? It might be immoral to kill such a creature. It’s wrong to create creatures whose moral stature we are perplexed about.”

Many times, the unaware viewer sits back and thinks many of the things seen in science fiction could never become a reality. However, if things continue on their current pace, it won’t be long until such tales join the historical chronicle of what has already transpired rather

than as a depiction of where things might be headed.

For The Sake Of Eternity Christians Need To Better Understand The Future

The church was instituted by God in part to stand as a defensive bulwark to protect against erroneous doctrine and spiritually damaging heresies from contaminating the minds of believers and thus to an extent soften the blow of a continually degrading culture. However, often those in positions of religious leadership are so hopelessly detached that when confronted with warnings as to the spiritual dangers threatening both the individual and society they offer little in the way of a viable response grounded in a Christian worldview and instead prattle on about matters few actually care about at best or at worst condition the average congregant to eventually acquiesce to the expanding technocollectivist agenda. This trend is evidenced in the inordinate emphasis upon COMMUNITY rather than Scripture as the authoritative source of values in an increasing number of ecclesiastical circles.

In my column “Just Because You Don’t Understand Doesn’t Mean Its Not Real: Most Epistemologically Unprepared For Bioenhancement Nightmares”, I went into lengthy detail how the Transhumanist movement presented not only a threat to traditional conceptions of liberty as it simultaneously veered off into either total anarchy or nearly absolute control but also threatened what it means to be a human being itself. As an important message I felt the broader church might be in need of

hearing, I decided to post it at a website where pastors, ministers, and Christian researchers of various types could publicize their homiletic endeavors to share with their peers and other interested believers.

Though my essay did not contain a single profanity and was completely nonpartisan as it did not mention a single word about Democrats or Republicans but instead focused on the moral implications of the Transhumanist philosophy, the site administrator responded, “It appears that you have some great points and some powerful truths that perhaps should be considered. However, I am unable to approve it for posting to your contributor page at this time because it is simply not a sermon of a type that would be useful to very many other pastors that use our website.”

Frankly, other than the campaign to remove God and Christ as the basis of our cultural foundation and to forbid the utterance of these holy names so that souls might be damned, what other issue is more relevant to the 21st century pulpit than the efforts to undermine innocent human life and now the very creation as we know it? Furthermore, this simmering contempt for the distinct uniqueness of human life stretches all the way to the highest levels of government, industry, and academia.

Several years ago, I attended a PCA congregation for a while where it seemed week after week, month upon month that the pastor went on and on about the life of David. This series was not from the standpoint of how the strengths and weaknesses of this particular leader might be applied or avoided in the life of the believer as this highly (one might say overly) degreed pastor made it explicitly clear that it was not his place to highlight

whatever underlying object lesson might be there in the text but rather simply to go verse by verse irrespective of whether or not the passage had any actual spiritual significance for the Christian rather than as information provided more as a background setting but nothing the average person would miss out on if somehow glossed over. For this reason coupled with the fact that I was made out to be the bigger reprobate for not ceremonially surrendering to the dictates of the group through formalized membership than those that made it known that booze would be available at Sunday school get togethers I eventually parted ways from that congregation.

Is the serious believer going to tell me that such trivialities devoid of an applied context have more relevance to their Christian walk than whether or not you and your family are going to be permitted to remain what has traditionally been classified as normal human beings? Though this threat sounds so off the wall as if it had been lifted straight from the pages of a comic book or a Star Trek marathon, credentialed scientists and other speculative academics are subtly starting to move the public conscientiousness away from seeing bioenhancement or genetic technologies as a way to correct the ravages of disease but as a way to enhance otherwise sufficient human beings.

As I stated in my previous examinations of this topic, during the 1990's about the scariest villains in popular science fiction had to be the Borg from *Star Trek's The Next Generation* and *Voyager* as those belonging to this species has a considerable percentage of their biological anatomy replaced with mechanical components in large part to eliminate individuality and to replace this

mode of perception with a unified group consciousness. In other words, the Borg were the ultimate Communists. However, now that some time has elapsed, it is now not all that uncommon to find in popular science magazines articles extolling the wonders of the Borg as the next step in human evolution.

One such article is titled "Is There A Borg In Our Future" published in the Fall 2007 issue of *Ad Astra*. The authors write, "For years, the most devoted advocates of robotic and human cooperation have envisioned mechanical devices and human beings exploring space together; but even in this vision, the two remain separate entities --- master and servant, owner and slave, flesh and machine. Technological developments now beginning to take place in some settings might permit a true merger --- humans equipped with robotic parts or machines possessing sentient qualities."

Thus, as man is reduced to the level of a biological machine as a result of materialistic evolution, the naturalist naturally begins to wonder why ought man to consider himself superior to the gadgets he employs to better enjoy his existence.

The implications of this are startling and are hinted at in the very next paragraph of the *Ad Astra* article. The article says, "The social metaphor for future space exploration may not be Luke Skywalker and his amusing companions R2-D2 and C-3PO but the Terminator." Does anyone seriously want to live in the world of the Terminator?

The article downplays this particular speculative milieu by admitting, "The merger of human features and machine parts has negative consequences in The

Terminator.” That’s putting it mildly.

In “The Terminator” series, a nuclear war is commenced by a defense computer called Skynet that becomes sentient. Its robotic constructs proceed to wipeout the surviving humans.

All of the Schwarzenegger versions of Terminators were robots with human skin stretched over their bodies. Is this what the authors of the *Ad Astra* article aspire to?

The authors attempt to calm the reader of the “negative consequences” they quickly gloss over by assuring that the horrors depicted in these films need not end up being reality. Ironically, those with their heads stuck in so-called “make believe” may have a more accurate understanding of human nature than those claiming to be more sensible in their approach.

The article concludes, “...if the Borg really are us, they need not be feared.” However, it is precisely because they could be us that they need to be feared.

A creation can never be morally superior to or better than its creator. Though created perfect, from the Book of Genesis, the Bible student gets the impression that it was not long before Adam and Eve rebelled against God and opened the floodgates to the evil and suffering making up the primary forces of history.

One could debate until blue in the face whether or not a robot was really alive or not. But imagine how much quicker then if allowed to make their own moral decisions until these independent artificial consciences will turn on their metaphysical progenitors in much the same way we all do on a daily basis into what use to be called “sin”.

If the authors of the *Ad Astra* article are so keen on

the amalgamation of man and machine beyond that of perhaps the replacement of a failing organic limb or organ for the purposes of alleviating suffering rather than to alter innate humanness beyond something intended by the design of providence, perhaps they should be the first to volunteer. Nothing to fear from the Borg; perhaps these authors would like to have their innermost thoughts scrutinized by the collective consciousness of that species. That will be, however, a hell these postulaters would rather inflict upon those they categorize as the lesser breeds of men (in other words, the rest of us).

Sometimes, the overly pious or those merely afraid of losing their tax exempt status (though you might be surprised how often these two constituencies often overlap) might claim, "Oh, even if all that is true, we only address spiritual and religious matters and don't soil our hands with politics or even scientific matters." However, Transhumanism has permeated theological and religious thought as well.

One religion in particular, though most of its adherents would not necessarily be deceived by Transhumanism's bizarre allure, would seem to have a unique affinity for Transhumanism as one of its foundational doctrines is that God was once a man from the planet Kolob (sounding disturbingly like Battlestar Galactica's Cobol [especially in relation to the 70's version]) and that you too can become your own God if you try hard enough.

At the website of an adherent of this particular faith that was dedicated to the advancement of Transhumanism, my initial commentary on the subject is referred to for daring to point out the movement's communalist dangers

as well as acknowledging how others have taken it in a radically individualist direction. This critic snaps, "Which is it? Are Transhumanists all radical individualists or radical communitarians?"

The answer is not all that simple. Usually, the leftists that embrace nonsense like Transhumanism like to pat themselves on the back for being so broadminded as to be able to hold two logically contradictory notions all at the same time.

Yet they so easily dismiss the notion that Transhumanism can be both radically individualistic and collectivistic at the same time. For it is not a movement that is either/or but rather of one feeding into another.

In *The Children Of Darkness*, Richard Wheeler writes, "Burke's implication is that a society of guiltless unfettered men is one ungovernable or at least governed by a tyrant (22)." Thus Transhumanism can simultaneously for now appeal to two constituencies with seemingly divergent agendas.

For example, in its initial stages, Transhumanism can appeal to freaks like those occasionally featured on the Discovery Channel who surgically alter themselves to look like tigers, lizards, or whatever other barnyard whatnots happy to catch their fancy. Albert Mohler mentioned in his examination of this subject someone who wanted to have a perfectly healthy leg amputated so this person would not have to be a source of "biopower for the state" (in other words, this lazy bum wanted to lay around all day no doubt collecting a check from the state he otherwise despises).

However, these dupes no matter how much they claim to be standing for liberty, since they are desiring to

take liberty past a point to which it was never intended, are merely the pawns of the collectivists who quietly manipulate things behind the scenes hoping things will grow so marked by disorder and confusion that the masses will clamor for an iron fist to tighten around their necks.

Either as a result of willful ignorance or because they are just so burdened by the concerns of the present, the average Christian may have little idea of the dangers to both the individual and society barreling down the pike. However, those either deriving hefty salaries or at least job satisfaction from being one of those charged with watching over the Lord's flock need to take this charge seriously from wherever the danger arrives from along the timeline or get out of the pulpit.